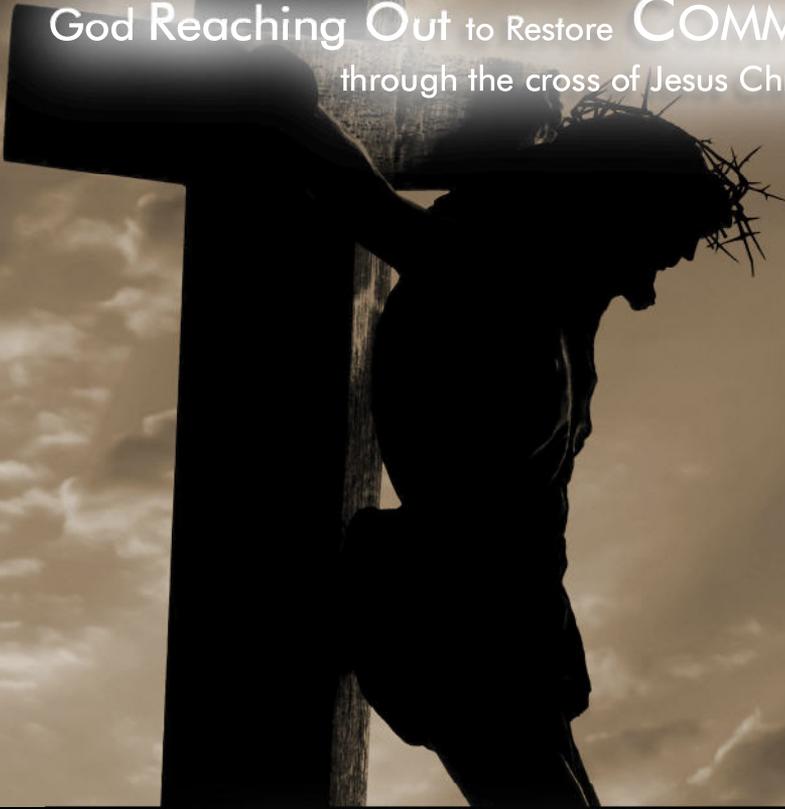


The **STORY** *of* **REDEMPTION**



God Reaching Out to Restore **COMMUNITY**
through the cross of Jesus Christ



THE PRICE IS PAID

Part 7: Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion

Note: For instructions on how to best use and lead this study, please go to www.StoryofRedemption.com.

- Download free .pdfs of each lesson!
- Watch videos of those who have gone through the study!
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The STORY of Redemption

The Price is Paid

PART 7: JESUS' TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION

How would you respond if you were falsely accused? Had enemies conspire against you? Were mocked or made fun of? Faced a cruel or young death? Jesus experienced all of this to an incredible degree. After being arrested by the religious leaders and abandoned by his disciples, he would be put on trial, tortured, and crucified. Yet, though it all, Jesus would respond in a way that truly was amazing. And through this death, he would bring about our redemption.



1. JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.

Immediately after Jesus was arrested, he was put on "trial" before the religious leaders. Though the Jewish people were ruled by the Romans, the chief priests were in charge of religious matters. Here is how the trial began.

⁵⁷ Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. ⁵⁹ The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward (Mt. 26:57-60).

To call these sham proceedings a trial is to make a mockery of the word. First, the "trial" was held in the middle of the night, pointing to its questionable nature. Why was it held then? For the same reason that Jesus was arrested at night—the religious leaders were on the wrong side of justice, and they were afraid of the people.

Second, Jesus' jurors were the same ones whom he had been fighting and disputing with him all week in the temple courts. They had already determined to kill him, and the trial was merely a convenient way to achieve this.

Third, the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin (the ruling council) were involved in an evidence manufacturing scheme against Jesus. But despite their efforts, they could not find anyone who could level a charge against Jesus that would stick. An interesting sub-plot in this story is that Peter had followed Jesus and was sitting in the courtyard of the high priest, watching the trial.

The charge that ultimately convicts Jesus seems rather strange to most of us. The response that Jesus gives is even stranger still. Note the following.

^{60b} Finally two came forward ⁶¹ and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

⁶² Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to

answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?"

⁶³ But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

⁶⁴ "You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?" (Mt. 26:60b-68).

The charge brought against Jesus was that he said that he was able to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. While on the surface this would seem to be a rather minor charge, we must remember that the temple was the center of Jewish religious life. Claiming to be able to destroy the temple was tantamount to claiming to be able to destroy the White House. Even today, this type of boast would at least send off alert signals to the authorities. In response to these serious charges, Jesus said nothing.

Since Jesus claimed not only to be able to destroy the temple, but to rebuild it in three days, he seemed to be claiming to have supernatural power. This led the high priest to ask him directly if he was the Christ, the Son of God. Finally Jesus answers, saying, "It is as you say" or "You have said so."

Jesus' claims were enough for his "jurors" to convict him of blasphemy, a crime punishable by death according to the Old Testament law. It was also at this point that Peter denied knowing Jesus three times as Jesus had predicted. When Peter heard the rooster crow, he went outside and wept bitterly (Mt. 26:66-72). While Jesus was being condemned by his enemies, he was also being betrayed by even his most loyal of followers.

Two things should be noted about this trial:

- **Jesus does not defend himself** against the charge of talk of destroying the temple, saying not a word in response.
- When Jesus does speak, **his own words that he is the Christ, the Son of God, is what convicts him.**



Jesus says nothing in response to the charges brought against him.

Jesus did nothing to prevent his death, and indeed he even helped seal his own doom. Ironically, though, the evidence that convicted Jesus was true. He did claim to be the Son of God; however, he was not guilty of blasphemy because he really *was* the Son of God.

Capital offenses were under the jurisdiction of the Roman governor. So as soon as morning came, Jesus' captors handed him over to the Roman Governor Pilate to be tried (Mt. 27:1-2).

During this time, when Judas found out that Jesus had been condemned, he was seized with regret. He tried to give the thirty silver coins back to the chief priest and the elders. He confessed that he had betrayed an innocent man. The religious leaders, however, care nothing for Judas' sudden change of heart, and in despair, Judas went out and hanged himself (Mt. 27:3-5).

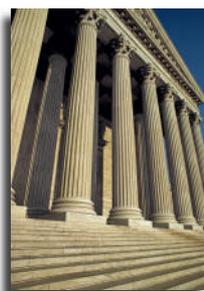
Peter and Judas both betrayed Jesus, and yet they reacted very differently. What is the lesson for us?

2. JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE PILATE.

Jesus' trial before Pilate was very similar to the trial that he had faced the night before, only this time the stakes were much higher. Note this exchange:

¹¹ Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied.

¹² When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" ¹⁴ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor (Mt. 27:11-14).



Jesus was handed over to the Roman governor Pilate, who was authorized to give the death penalty.

When the chief priests presented their case to Pilate, they most likely presented Jesus as an insurrectionist. After all, one of the Jewish hopes for the Messiah/Christ was that he would lead a rebellion against the hated Romans and set up a worldly kingdom, and Jesus had already confessed that he was the Christ. Thus, Pilate asks him, are you indeed the king of the Jews? As before, Jesus answers yes. Of course, he was not the type of king that his opponents were trying to represent him as, but Jesus does not fight the charges. Despite Jesus' answer, though, Pilate seems to sense that he is no threat to the government.

There are three reasons why Pilate does not believe that Jesus is a guilty man.

- **Jesus does nothing to defend himself.** Most would be desperately pleading their cases when their lives are at stake, but Jesus says nothing.
- **Pilate does not trust Jesus' accusers.** Pilate saw that the religious authorities were motivated by jealousy of Jesus' popularity.
- **Pilate's wife believes he is innocent.** In a message, Pilate's wife warns him because of a dream she had not to harm "this innocent man."

But despite Pilate's belief in Jesus' innocence, Jesus would not be set free. Pilate's desire to please the crowd would ensure Jesus' death.

Each year at the governor's feast there was a custom that the governor would release one prisoner. That year, Pilate gave the crowd a choice as to who he would release—Jesus, or a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. Pilate thought that the crowd would choose to free Jesus, who had been popular among the people. He would then free an innocent man, and he could ex-

cuse himself from the religious leaders' wrath by blaming his release on the crowd. But events did not work out as he had planned.

20 The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. 21 "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered.

22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" 23 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" 25 All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" 26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified (Mt. 27:20-26).

The religious leaders may have pointed out to the crowd that Jesus was now in the hands of the Romans. How could he be the Messiah? He couldn't possibly lead a rebellion against Rome from prison. He was a failure. And having stirred up the crowd, they shout for his death. Pilate, a man unwilling to do what is right, sentences a man whom he knew to be innocent to a most horrible death—crucifixion.

Pilate's soldiers treat Jesus terribly. Surrounding Jesus, together they:

- **Strip his clothes** off of him.
- Put a red robe on him, a **crown of thorns** on his head, a staff in his hand, and bow down before him, saying, "Hail King of the Jews."
- Spit on him, **strike him** on the head again and again and mock him.



The soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head, mocking him.

Then they strip him of his robe, put his own clothes back on him, and lead him away to be crucified (Mt. 27:27-31).

What do you think Jesus was thinking and feeling through this torture?

3. JESUS' DEATH.

A man named Simon of Cyrene is drafted by the soldiers and forced to carry Jesus' cross. Jesus is taken to Golgotha, which means "the Place of the Skull." They give Jesus wine to drink. But they had spiked it with bitter gall (bile), and so Jesus refuses to drink it. Then they would crucify him.

37 Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38 Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 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!" 41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42 "He saved others," they

said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him (Mt. 27:37-44).

Jesus' crucifixion is filled with irony. The sign that was intended to mock him is true—Jesus *is* the king of the Jews. Those who laugh at his claim that he could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days do not realize that in three days Jesus' body--the temple--*would* rise again. The religious leaders who challenge him to save himself if he is the Son of God do not comprehend that he really *is* the Son of God—and if he had saved himself there would be no hope for them. The robbers who insult him do not realize that they are insulting the creator of the universe.

These are Jesus' last moments:

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** (Mt. 27:45-50).



Jesus—God in human form—was rejected by mankind. He died a cruel death, undergoing pain, rejection, and humiliation, so that the price for our sin might be paid. **God became our Savior, and he redeemed us from our sin.**

The Savings Effects of Christ's Death

- Christ demonstrates his love for us, which should draw us to him (Jn. 12:32).
- Our sins can be taken away, as Jesus bore them in his body (1 Peter 2:24).
- We can receive righteousness and be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:21)
- We can be freed from the slavery of sin for a life of service (Mark 10:45).
- Satan and his evil forces were defeated (Colossians 2:15).

How does Jesus' death make you feel? What do you think that God is calling you to do in response to Jesus' sacrifice and death for you?

The story does not end here! Next we will look at Jesus' glorious resurrection and taking hold of the new life in Christ as the *Story of Redemption* continues.

Part 7: Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion

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The **STORY** of
REDEMPTION

QUESTIONS:

Multiple Choice.

1. _____ The disciple who followed Jesus after his arrest & watched his trial was:
a. Peter b. James c. Judas d. Andrew
2. _____ Which of the following is true? Jesus' trial was questionable in nature because:
a. It was held in the middle of the night.
b. Jesus' judge and jury had already determined that they would kill him.
c. The religious leaders were trying to manufacture evidence against Jesus.
d. All of the above.

True/False.

3. _____ Jesus defended himself at his trial, protesting the false charges against him.
4. _____ Pilate believed that Jesus was an innocent man, but ordered his crucifixion anyway.

Matching.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 5. _____ Mocked Jesus while he was on the cross | a. Caiaphas |
| 6. _____ Wept bitterly after he betrayed Jesus. | b. Robbers |
| 7. _____ Killed himself after he betrayed Jesus. | c. Pilate |
| 8. _____ The high priest under whom Jesus was tried | d. Simon of Cyrene |
| 9. _____ The Roman governor who tried Jesus | e. Judas |
| 10. _____ The man who was forced to carry Jesus' cross | f. Peter |

Discovery Bible Study - Make three columns on a piece of paper In column 1, write out the following verse. In column 2, write the verse in your own words. In column 3, write out how you will apply/obey this verse this week. Come to the next study prepared to share this.

"⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7-8).

For Further Study: What do you learn about Christ's death from these passages?

Colossians 2:13-15 _____

Romans 8:1-4 _____

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 _____

1 Peter 3:20-24 _____

To receive answers to the above questions, learn more about Discovery Bible Study, or receive the next part of the Story, go to www.StoryofRedemption.com or see your study leader.