

Bible Reading Challenge 41: MESSIAH – The Lamb of God

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

Main Idea/Out Loud Intro:

Remember the prophesy way back in Genesis 3:15: “He will crush your (Satan’s) head, and you will bruise his heel.” And do you remember, after he tried and failed to tempt Jesus in the desert, the devil left “until an opportune time” (Luke 4:13)? Well, he’s back now. In the reading this week, we’ll see Satan tempts three people: Judas, Peter, and probably Jesus himself. The devil might even have thought he won this round.

But remember what John the Baptist said when he first saw Jesus? “Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!” John himself probably didn’t know exactly what that meant, even as the Holy Spirit helped him say it. In fact, the disciples haven’t understood much of what Jesus told them. Remember what Luke says? “But they understood none of these things…” (Luke 18:34).

They had been so happy and excited when Jesus rode into Jerusalem with everybody cheering—it looked like Jesus was finally ready to claim his kingdom! But what if he had? What if Jesus had walked right into the temple, called on the angels to burn up the sky, and proclaimed that the Kingdom of Heaven was now fully on earth? If that had happened, His kingdom would have had only one person: Jesus. The temple doors would’ve slammed shut behind him, leaving everyone else outside. No one else could come in, because all our sacrifices, the blood of goats and bulls, all our being sorry and trying to obey—none of that could make anyone clean enough to be in the presence of God.

The disciples don’t know all that. By the end of the week, the worst thing that they could ever imagine was happened. And they were right: it was the worst thing that ever happened. But it became the best. And now, with the Holy Spirit’s help, we understand Jesus’s words, words that both Satan and the disciples couldn’t: “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” (John 12:31)

Reading for this week: Mark 14:26-65, Matthew 27:1-26; Luke 22:44-23:16, John 18-19

Further references: Ps. 22, Is. 53, Hebrews 5:7, 10:7

Questions for Discussion:

1. This week we’re reading all four gospel accounts of Jesus’ death. Name at least one detail you see in each that is not found in the others.
2. What does Jesus mean by “this cup” in Mark 14:36 and Luke 22:42? What is the meaning of “cup” in Is. 51:17, Jer. 25:15 and Ez. 23:31-33? What kind of cup does Jesus offer his followers at the last supper? What makes the difference? (see Matt. 26:27-28)
3. How did Judas and Peter respond to their guilt? What made the difference? (see John 18:27-30)
4. What kind of lies were told about Jesus during and after his trial? (see Luke 23:2, Mark 14:55-58, John 19:7,12)
5. What did Jesus mean by “It is finished”? (see John 4:32, 9:14)
6. What does it mean that the curtain of the temple that walled off the Most Holy Place, was split in two? (see Hebrews 9:12, 24; 10:19-20)

Activities:

- **Map It:** Find a map of Jerusalem and locate the Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, Golgotha, and “the Pavement.”

- **Vocabulary:** Add the words **atonement** and **propitiation** to your vocabulary cards.
- **What was the Last Supper?** Find out what Jews of Jesus' time ate for Passover. You can create a real meal and eat it, or just draw the food on a paper plate. Talk about when Passover began and how many years it had been celebrated. Ask the kids why might Jesus have died at the time of Passover and not at another time of year. How is the Lord's supper celebrated today?