



# 2

## God's Plan Unfolds

### Key Theme

- God's plan was in place before time began.

### Key Passages

- Matthew 26:57–68; John 18:28–19:26

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe why the Jewish leaders condemned Jesus.
- Explain how God was in charge of all that happened to Jesus.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

Write on the board, "How many trials did Jesus face?"



### Studying God's Word

The events leading up to the Cross were unfolding according to God's plan. The Jewish leaders wanted Jesus dead for blasphemy—for claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God. They tried Him and brought Him to Pilate who also questioned Him. Jesus remained obedient and trusted the Father's will.

Study the Prepare to Share section.

Go Before the Throne.



### Activity: The Trials of Jesus

You will walk the students through the procession of trials that Jesus faced leading up to His Crucifixion.

Student Guides

Pencils

Scripture Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM



### Activity: Truth Be Told Review Game (Optional)

The students will review the lesson by playing a board game.

Truth Be Told Game Board and Answer Key

Game pieces for each team

Truth Be Told Question and Number Cards

Poster putty



# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above with this background.

The hour had come, and the Savior celebrated His last Passover in the upper room with His closest friends and Judas the betrayer (Luke 22:14). Jesus knew He would soon be betrayed (Luke 22:21), arrested (John 18:12), and killed (John 19:16). He knew also that this was the cup which His Father had given Him to drink (John 18:11).

The Bible tells us that many people were gathered together against Jesus to destroy Him—both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel (Acts 4:27). Ultimately, it was the Roman governor Pilate who gave the actual order to execute the Savior (John 19:16). But it was the Jewish high priest, the priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Jewish people who relentlessly demanded that Jesus be killed (John 18:30, 19:15). The Jewish leaders had previously conspired with the high priest and plotted to take Jesus and kill Him (Matthew 26:3–4). These were the very people who had waited centuries for the Messiah to come and save them.

What had Jesus done that would incite the Jewish leaders to such hostility? We find the answer in Scripture, of course. Many of the Jews were furious with Jesus's claim to be God! They accused Him of blasphemy when Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic—blasphemy because only God could forgive sins (Matthew 9:2–3). When Jesus admitted that He knew God, He was from God, and God had sent Him, the Jews sought to take Him. But it was not yet His hour (John 7:29–30).

When Jesus called Himself the great I AM, this led the Jews to take up stones to kill Him (John 8:58–59). And when Jesus made the statement, “I and My Father are one,” the Jews again were provoked to stone Him (John 10:30–31). These Jews understood Jesus's claim that He was God! But they would not believe it. And this is why they demanded His death.

But there was another purpose in their hatred of Jesus—that Scripture might be fulfilled. Jesus told His disciples that one of the reasons the world hated both Him and His Father was, “that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause’” (John 15:25). This quote of Psalm 69:4 demonstrates that even in the Jews' unfounded hatred of Jesus, God was at work fulfilling His Word.

So when His hour had finally come—according to the perfect plan of God—they were all too ready to accuse Jesus and see Him crucified. Jesus was betrayed and arrested in the garden (John 18:12). Then He was

brought before the Jewish leader Annas (John 18:13), and then delivered to Caiaphas the high priest (John 18:24). From there He went to Pilate, the governor (John 18:28–29). Pilate sent Him to Herod who had jurisdiction over Galilee (Luke 23:8). Herod sent Him back to Pilate (Luke 23:11). Here Jesus was subjected to more torture, ridicule, and humiliation and was finally delivered over to be crucified (John 19:1–16).

What a horrible crime and sin against the Son of God! And yet, the Scriptures tell us that this was all accomplished perfectly and according to God's determined purpose and foreknowledge (Acts 2:23). Jesus came to do the perfect will of God in perfect obedience, even to the point of death—death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).

Jesus knew what He must do. Even in the garden during the betrayal, while Peter wanted to defend Jesus with the sword, Jesus's response was that He must drink this cup that His Father had given to Him (John 18:11).

God was in control of all that was happening. Even this worst of all evils was under the sovereign hand of God the Father. Jesus knew this and made it clear to Pilate when He answered him and said, “You could have no power over me unless it had been given you from above” (John 19:11a).

The trial and death of Jesus Christ should always bring us to the remembrance of the gospel. For in spite of the Jews, the Gentiles, the Pharisees, the Romans, and all those directly responsible for Jesus's death, we are told in Scripture that while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us (Romans 5:8). That means it was our sins that caused His death; it was for our sins that Jesus was punished. As the writer of the song, “How Deep the Father's Love for Us” so movingly penned:

It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life  
I know that it is finished

For He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree that we might live (1 Peter 2:24). It is only through Jesus's death and Resurrection that sinners could ever be reconciled to God and receive the hope of eternal life.

## HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Few people realize it, but the trial of Jesus was not a single trial, but six different trials—three before the Jewish religious authorities and three before the Roman secular authorities. All of these trials were illegal and unjust according to Jewish law and tradition.

Jesus was charged before the Jewish leaders for blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God, the Messiah (Mark 14:60–63). The three Jewish trials included His appearance before Annas, the former high priest (John 18:12–13); Caiaphas, the current high priest, and the Sanhedrin—an assembly of religious leaders (John 18:19–24; Matthew 26:57).

After these trials, Jesus was taken before the Roman authorities where the charges brought against Him were quite different. Jesus was charged with “. . . perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King” (Luke 23:2). These trials took place before Pilate, the Roman governor (John 18:29), Herod (Luke 23:7), and then Pilate again (Luke 23:11–12).

The Bible reports that Pilate found no fault with Jesus (Luke 23:4). And yet the people insisted that Pilate do something. So Pilate delivered Him to Herod, who had jurisdiction over Galilee (Luke 23:7). Herod questioned Jesus. He, too was influenced by the chief priests and scribes who stood and vehemently accused Jesus (Luke 23:10). But again, Jesus was found innocent of any crime worthy of crucifixion. Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate—and Pilate said again that he could find no fault in Jesus that was deserving of death (Luke 23:14–15). In fact, the Bible states that Pilate wished to release Jesus. But the people were still shouting that He be crucified! Again, Pilate repeated that Jesus had done no evil (Luke 23:20–22). In a final effort to have Jesus released, Pilate offered the prisoner Barabbas to be crucified. But the crowds called for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified. Pilate finally granted their demand and surrendered Jesus to their will (Luke 23:25).

The trials before the Jewish authorities and the Romans were remarkably unjust and illegal. The animosity of the Jewish leaders toward Jesus is clearly evident in the process they followed as they blatantly disregarded many of their own laws. Scholars and historians have noted a number of violations of Jewish law in these trials.

- Jesus was arrested illegally. He was arrested secretly, at night, on no formal charge of any crime, by those who were to be His judges. All of these points were against Jewish law.
- Jesus was tried illegally. He was tried at night, in secret, and on the eve of a Sabbath during feast time—all of which violated Jewish law.
- Jesus was indicted illegally. He was charged for a crime based on His own statements. The court indicted Jesus with no supporting evidence whatsoever, and the witnesses against Him were found to be false witnesses whose statements conflicted.
- Jesus was convicted illegally. He was convicted by

the Sanhedrin as a group. But each member of the court was supposed to vote individually to convict or acquit. It was also illegal because the merits of Jesus’s defense were not considered.

- Jesus was sentenced illegally. He was sentenced to death in a place forbidden by law. A sentence of death could only be pronounced in a court, but Jesus was sentenced at the home of the high priest. It was also illegal because a sentence of death could not be carried out until the following day; only a few hours passed before Jesus was placed on the Cross.

Clearly, these trials of Jesus represent the ultimate mockery of justice. Jesus, the only innocent man ever to have lived, was found guilty and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

The irony of the situation is that those who misjudged Jesus will be judged rightly by Him some day. The tables will be turned. Jesus’s judges were nothing but criminals, and they will be justly condemned if they remained in their unbelief. Jesus told the Jewish leaders that God “has committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). The Apostle Paul told the men of Athens that God “has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus] whom He has ordained” (Acts 17:31). We can be assured that no matter the injustices we experience, one day all will be made right. Jesus will judge the world in righteousness, and all the scales will be balanced.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord Jesus, you are the Messiah, the long-awaited promised one of God. You performed miracles and revealed your identity as God. But many did not accept that truth. Blind and rebellious, they denied who you were and broke their own laws to have you killed. Not much has changed. Many still say they are looking for truth and meaning, but they refuse to recognize you as God. It breaks my heart to see lost and dying people everywhere who know about you, but who choose not to believe. Help me to persevere, to trust your plan, and to make disciples of those who do believe and desire to follow after you. Use this lesson to bring my students to a better understanding of who you are, what you did for sinners, and how glorious redemption through you can be.

## Review

Last week we had the joy of thinking about how Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as a memorial of His sacrifice on the Cross for us. But we also talked of the heartbreaking betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot that led to His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane.

? How did our last lesson impact your thinking or actions through the week?

*Discuss various answers.*

Today, our texts take us to the trials of Jesus before the various leaders, ultimately

resulting in His death. But remember that all of this was according to God's prearranged plan. Nothing we will discuss today was an accident. Prophecy was being fulfilled every step of the way, and it was all done to bring glory to God and salvation to rebels. As we examine these texts, I want you to be looking for the reason that the Jewish leaders wanted Jesus dead and why the Romans cooperated with them.





# The Trials of Jesus

## MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils
- Scripture Strips

## INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out the Scripture Strips to the students as they enter the class so they are prepared to read each passage.

We're going to start our lesson this week with an activity to give us a big-picture view of the events from the arrest of Jesus to His Crucifixion. In your Student Guide, you will find the activity called The Trials of Jesus. As we read through each passage, we are going to cover the six different trials Jesus faced over a period of about 12 hours. We know He went to the garden fairly late in the evening, allowing time for eating, washing the disciples' feet, Judas assembling the troops, additional teaching in John 14–17, and praying—all of this happening after sunset. We'll assume that the arrest happened at some point after midnight.

If I handed you one of the Scripture Strips, be ready to read. As we read each section, we will pause for a moment for you to write two ideas in each blank: who was the authority and what happened to Jesus.

1. **John 18:1–3**—*The arrest was at the hands of the guards of the chief priests and the Roman authorities. Jesus was bound and taken by force by those with clubs and swords, but He went willingly.*
2. **John 18:12–13, 18:19–23**—*Jesus appeared before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest. He questioned Jesus, and one of the officers struck Jesus for His response.*
3. **Matthew 26:57–68**—*Jesus was led before Caiaphas, the high priest, where false witnesses were brought to accuse Him. After Jesus acknowledged that He is the Son of God, the high priest accused Him*

*of blasphemy, and those present mocked, spat upon, and hit Him repeatedly.*

4. **Luke 22:66–71**—*(Point out the timing of this event, coming at dawn.) Jesus now appeared before the full council of the elders (the Sanhedrin) and again acknowledged that He is the Son of God. The council announced Him guilty of blasphemy.*
5. **Luke 23:1–7**—*The whole council led Jesus before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, where the Jews presented charges against Jesus. Hearing He was a Galilean, Pilate had Jesus sent to Herod for trial.*
6. **Luke 23:8–12**—*Jesus appeared before Herod Antipas where He did not answer Herod a word. Herod and his men mocked and abused Jesus, returning Him to Pilate, wearing a "gorgeous robe."*
7. **Luke 23:13–25**—*Jesus was again before Pilate who desired to release Him. However, the Jews asked for Barabbas to be released and cried out for Jesus to be scourged and crucified. Matthew 27:27–31 describes the further mocking by the soldiers, the crown of thorns, and being led to His Crucifixion.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Around midnight, Jesus was arrested and faced the first three trials before the Jewish authorities by dawn. Between dawn (around 6:00 a.m.) and 9:00 a.m. the three trials before the Roman authorities took place. Mark 15:25 puts the Crucifixion of Jesus at the "third hour," which would be three hours after sunrise, or 9:00 a.m. In Matthew 27:45 we learn that at noon (the sixth hour) the sky became dark, and at 3:00 p.m. (the ninth hour) Jesus died.

So, within nine hours after His arrest, Jesus had faced six trials, been dragged back and forth across Jerusalem, received multiple beatings and continual mocking, and then was hung upon a Roman cross to endure six more hours of agony. Have the students mark the timing of the events on the activity sheet.



► Write on the board, "How many trials did Jesus face?"



# Studying God's Word

Matthew 26:57–68

## READ THE WORD

Now that we have the general timeline of the trials in our minds, let's read Matthew 26:57–68 together more closely and look for the reason the Jewish leaders condemned Jesus. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? **Who delivered Jesus to Caiaphas?** *The soldiers who had arrested Him.*
- ? **Who else was gathered there?** *The scribes and the elders were also gathered there. Based on a comparison of the four Gospels, this was likely only a portion of the council, but the whole council had assembled by dawn.*
- ? **Who else had followed Jesus to the trial?** *Peter. (We will discuss Peter's denial and restoration in the next lesson.)*
- ? **What were the Jewish leaders seeking?** *They were seeking witnesses to testify falsely against Jesus so they might put Him to death. They had been plotting this sincerely since He had raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:53).*
- ? **How many witnesses came forward?** *Many.*
- ? **How many witnesses failed?** *All of the witnesses were inconsistent with one another except two.*
- ? **Why was it necessary to seek so many witnesses?** *Mark 1:55–59 describes the testimony more fully. The testimonies against Jesus did not agree. In Deuteronomy 17:6, God demands that two or three witnesses must give the same testimony in order for a death sentence to be carried out.*
- ? **What commandment of God were the witnesses violating?** *They were violating the commandment from Exodus 20:16 to not bear false witness against Jesus.*
- ? **What accusation finally had two witnesses in agreement?** *He was accused of saying He could destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days.*
- ? **How did Jesus respond to the accusations from the witnesses?** *He kept silent.*
- ? **Was this accusation enough to put Him to death?** *Since Caiaphas moves on to another accusation and strategy, it seems that this charge would not be seen as worthy of death. They needed a stronger charge, so they kept fishing.*
- ? **How did Caiaphas try to pressure Jesus to answer?** *He put Him under oath before God and asked Him a question.*
- ? **What did Caiaphas ask Jesus to affirm or deny?** *Whether or not He was the Christ, the Son of God.*
- ? **How did Jesus respond?** *He agreed that He was the Christ.*

? **What did Jesus add to His acknowledgment?** *He said that He would be seated at God's right hand (the right hand of Power) and come on the clouds of heaven the next time they saw Him.*

? **What was Jesus alluding to in verse 63?** *Remind students to look at the cross-references in their Bibles if they are unfamiliar with this connection. Jesus is clearly referring to Daniel 7:13–14 and identifying Himself as the Messiah/Son of Man.*

Daniel 7:13–14

? **How did Caiaphas respond to this claim from Jesus?** *He tore his clothes in response to what he perceived as blasphemy.*

? **What crime did Caiaphas accuse Jesus of?** *Blasphemy.*

? **What punishment did the Jews prescribe?** *"He is deserving of death." This is consistent with the punishment prescribed in Leviticus 24:16.*

Leviticus 24:16

? **How did they treat Jesus as a result of their judgment?** *They spat in His face, beat Him, and mocked Him by asking Him to prophesy who had hit Him.*

? **What three names identify Jesus in this passage?** *The Son of God, the Son of Man, and the Christ.*

## Discover the Truth

In an ironic twist, the very men who had been entrusted with the oracles of God and were the teachers and elders of Israel sought to bring charges of blasphemy against the Messiah they had been waiting for. They were more afraid of losing their political power than they were of facing the judgment of God. They mistreated Jesus in inhumane ways and brought in witnesses who were willing to lie.

And all of this was conducted at night, making it against the law. They did finally have a hearing after dawn before the whole Sanhedrin, but the verdict had already been established. This was probably nothing more than a formal step for these men to appease their consciences and to make it look above board in the eyes of the people.

? **Though it is not one that we have on our poster, what attribute of God was Jesus demonstrating as He faced these false charges and the abuse from His fellow Jews while remaining silent?** *Patient: Jesus knew that all of this had to take place, so He exercised patience in enduring the falsehoods and the abuse.*

PATIENT

To the same point, we can also think of Jesus as being faithful to what the Father had called Him to do. He had prayed in the garden for the cup of suffering to be removed, if possible, but He was willing to be faithful to His Father in carrying out the plan decreed before the foundation of the world.

FAITHFUL

The fact that this was all part of God's plan is also evident in the words of Jesus recorded in John 14:29–31 as Jesus led His disciples from the upper room to the garden. "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here." With these words Jesus intentionally went to where He knew Judas

would bring the guards to arrest Him. He could do nothing else because that is what His Father intended for Him. He was obeying the Father's commands completely.



## READ THE WORD

John 18:28–19:26

Our final passage today comes from John 18:28–19:26. Since we are covering a large passage, we are going to focus our questions on understanding why Pilate agreed to crucify Jesus and how such a terrible thing could happen to the Son of God. *Have someone read to the end of chapter 18 and someone else the rest of the passage.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

Luke 23:1–2

- ? What reason did the Jews initially give Pilate to condemn Jesus? *They simply called Him an evildoer.*
- ? What additional accusations does Luke 23:1–2 tell us the Jews brought to Pilate? *They told Pilate that Jesus was perverting the nation, telling people not to pay taxes, and claiming to be a king. Based on Pilate's words in John 18:33, Pilate must have received these accusations even though John does not record them. Other than being a king, none of these match the accusations in the trials.*
- ? How did Jesus respond when Pilate asked Him if He was the King of the Jews? *He eventually told Pilate that He is a king.*
- ? How did Jesus describe His kingdom to Pilate? *It is not a kingdom of this world or His servants would be fighting in earthly ways.*
- ? What did Jesus identify as His purpose in 18:37? *He said that He had come to bear witness of the truth and that those who are of the truth would hear (follow/obey) Him.*
- ? How did Pilate regard truth? *With his question, he denied that there is truth.*
- ? How did the Jews respond when Pilate wanted to release Jesus? *They wanted Barabbas, a robber, to be released rather than Jesus.*
- ? John skips over the trial before Herod, which would have taken place between verses 38 and 39. After having Jesus scourged, what did Pilate repeat? *He repeated that he found no fault in Jesus.*
- ? What was Jesus wearing as He appeared before the crowd of Jews after His scourging? *He was wearing a purple robe and a crown of thorns.*
- ? What did these two items represent? *Both were used to mock His claim of being a king as a king would wear a crown and a majestic robe (purple is often considered a color of royalty).*
- ? How did the Jews respond when Pilate presented Jesus in His “kingly” garb? *They called out for Him to be crucified.*

- ? **What did Pilate repeat to them?** *He said for the third time that he found no fault in Jesus that He should be crucified.*
- ? **What reason did the Jews give Pilate for crucifying Jesus in John 19:7?** *They presented the charge of blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God, rather than the original charges they mentioned regarding paying taxes.*
- ? **How did Pilate respond to this new accusation?** *He was afraid and questioned Jesus again.*
- ? **When Jesus did not reply to Pilate's question, how did Pilate try to intimidate Him?** *He told Jesus that he had the power to crucify or release Him.*
- ? **What does Jesus's answer reveal about the source of Pilate's power?** *Any power that an earthly ruler has comes from God. The source of authority and power is reinforced by Paul in Romans 13:1 and many other places in Scripture.*
- ? **How did the Jews respond when Pilate tried again to release Jesus?** *Again, they called for His crucifixion.*
- ? **Who did the Jews claim as their king rather than Jesus?** *They claimed Caesar as their king rather than the Messiah.*
- ? **What did this indicate about their true attitude toward God?** *In saying they had no king but Caesar, they were denying that God was their King.*
- ? **What does Acts 2:23 remind us about all that happened through these trials?** *All of this happened according to the purpose and foreknowledge of God so that redemption might be secured for sinners.*

## Discover the Truth

In just a few short hours, Jesus had been arrested, tried six times, beaten and mocked repeatedly, and then scourged at the hands of the Romans.

Despite Pilate's various efforts to convince the Jews to release Jesus, they continued to cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Just like the Jews, Pilate feared losing his power. If he let Jesus go, he feared a riot that would demonstrate his ineffectiveness as a governor and his inevitable replacement. If he crucified Jesus, he would be guilty of the blood of an innocent man. Even though the Jews cried out that they would accept the consequences on themselves and their children (Matthew 27:25), Pilate still announced that he was innocent of Jesus's blood as he sent Jesus to His death. He caved to their demands in spite of his reservations, ordering the crucifixion of the Son of God who was King of the Jews.

But really, it was the blood of Jesus that was required to cover the sins of people like Pilate and the Jews in the crowd—all sinners in need of redemption. Pilate could wash his hands all he wanted, but he was still a sinner in need of the Savior's sacrifice.





# Truth Be Told Review Game (Optional)

## MATERIALS

- Truth Be Told Game Board
- Truth Be Told Question Cards
- Truth Be Told Question Answer Key
- Truth Be Told Number Cards (or game spinner or dice)
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team
- Poster putty

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Divide your class into teams. Teams will take turns drawing a Truth Be Told Question Card. Team members will take turns answering the questions. They will quickly determine an answer and give it. If they are correct, they will draw a Truth Be Told Number Card and move that number of spaces on the game board. As play proceeds, follow the directions on the game board. Alternate between teams as long as time permits.*

We are going to review now by playing “Truth Be Told.” I’ll put you into teams. Teams will take turns picking a question card

and answering the question. If the answer is correct, you will draw a number card and move your game piece that many spaces. All directions on the board must be followed.

Return the used cards to the stacks. *Answers to the questions are provided on the Truth Be Told Question Answer Key on the Resource DVD-ROM.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

The Jewish leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy against God. They hated Jesus so much that they couldn’t see the truth. He really was the Messiah! The Roman governor thought he had power over Jesus’s life! But Jesus set him straight! Jesus told Pilate that the power and authority he thought he had was not his own. That power came from God! This was God’s plan— God was in control.



## Applying God’s Word

### WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Even though we have not gone into the details of the beatings, mocking, and scourging that Jesus endured following His arrest and before His Crucifixion, all of this physical and mental abuse was not the end. The Father was directing these events in a way that allowed all involved to reject Jesus as King and bring condemnation on themselves while securing the very means of their salvation from that condemnation. Jesus would soon bear all the wrath of God against sin as He hung on the Cross.

Many of the Jews who charged Jesus with blasphemy and called for His death from the crowd would later see the sinfulness of their actions and turn to Him in faith, acknowledging that He was the Messiah (Acts 2:14–46, 6:7). However, there is no indication that Pilate ever turned to trust in the Truth that had stood in his presence. One day Pilate and all those who

rejected Jesus as King will stand before His judgment seat and face a trial of their own.

But let us not be arrogant and think that we would not have been among the crowd mocking Jesus and calling for His death so that a robber could be released. In fact, that was our position before God's grace became real in our lives, and we turned to the Savior, repenting of our sins and trusting that the Father had sent His Son to the Cross to die in our place. The plan that was in place before the foundation of the world came to its fruition through six trials where the Just Judge was sentenced to death for blasphemy by those who were actually blaspheming with their calls to crucify Him.

What a gracious and merciful Savior we have in Jesus Christ.

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? As you think about all that Jesus endured from His arrest and through the trials, how does it help you to appreciate what Christ has done for you?  
*Discuss various answers.*
- ? Had you been in the crowd before Pilate, how do you think you would have responded to his offer to release Jesus? *While we may want to think that we would have worked for His release, apart from God's grace in our life and the working of the Holy Spirit, we would be in the same place as those calling out, "Crucify!" In fact, it is for our sins that Christ had to die. We can hear this sentiment in some hymns (e.g., "Behold the Man upon a cross, My guilt upon His shoulders, Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice, Call out among the scoffers" from "How Deep the Father's Love for Us").*
- ? How do the details recorded in the Bible regarding Jesus's trials confirm the authenticity and authority of the Bible? *While each of the Gospels presents a slightly different perspective, putting all of the information together gives us a detailed account of times and places which assures us that the accounts are true. We trust by faith that these accounts are true because they are part of the Word of God, but the details encourage us in our faith.*
- ? The Jews had been waiting for the Messiah for thousands of years. As Jesus walked among them, He healed people, performed miracles, announced the kingdom of God, and taught them truth from the Father tightly connected to the Old Testament. As you think about the situation that the Jewish leaders were in, why do you think they missed the fact that He was the Messiah, charging Him with blasphemy and seeking to kill Him? *Discuss various answers, reminding the students to connect their thoughts to truth from the Bible. Many of the Jews were expecting a political Messiah who would come to overthrow Rome. Because they had rejected the truth, it was also evident that they were not being drawn by the Father (John 10). Further, their apparent lust for power in government affairs seemed to blind them from seeing that Jesus was the Messiah. These attitudes continued after His death and into the period of the apostles.*
- ? If the Jews had performed the execution according to their own law, Jesus would have died by stoning. Why would this have been an impossible outcome? *Many times, Jesus had predicted His death by crucifixion and at the hands of the Romans (John 3:14–15, 12:30–33, 18:31–33, etc.). There are even descriptions of Jesus's death in Old*

Testament passages such as Isaiah 53. We must remember that all of these events were accomplished under God's sovereign, guiding hand (Acts 2:22–24) as men acted according to their own wills.

? In the past, some historians doubted the authenticity of the account of Jesus's trials before Pilate because there was no evidence outside of the Bible that there was a governor named Pilate. In 1961, a stone was found inscribed with "Tiberieum, [Pon]tius Pilatus, [Praef]ectus Iuda[ae]" (translated; Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea under Tiberius). Did this discovery prove that Jesus was actually tried by Pilate? *While finds like this give external confirmation of the truthfulness of Scripture, they are not the source of authority we look to. It was true that Jesus was tried by Pilate as recorded in Scripture before this stone was found, and it is true after. When we are challenged with claims like these, we need to be sure to look to the Bible as the source of truth and call people to trust what it says, especially about salvation in Christ alone.*



### MEMORY VERSE

**Matthew 28:18–20** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for His plan to redeem us through the innocent Lamb who was slain for us.
- Praise God for His sovereign will accomplished in the death of Jesus.
- Ask God for a deeper recognition of our sinfulness and His holiness.