





Crucify Him!

Matthew 27:1-2, 11-31

Mark 15:1-20

Luke 23:1-25

John 18:28-40; 19:1-16

Trial & Crucifixion

Study this story in all four gospels, combining information from all the gospels to tell the story. It is up to the teacher to choose a gospel from which to teach the story, and you may choose to teach from either Matthew or John. Be sure to include the details of Pilate's wife only told in the book of Matthew.

The entire story of the trial and crucifixion of Christ is told in multiple lessons. This lesson will focus only on the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate and his sentencing. Tell the story to your class and explain the context in which the events took place. This lesson will attempt to combine all four gospels into a sequential timeline, but the timing of exactly what came first is not entirely clear.

Give a brief overview of recent events.

Triumphal entry: Just days before, Jesus entered Jerusalem with a triumphal entry, greeted by cheering crowds (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19).

Last Supper: He shared his last supper with his disciples in an upper room (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12).

He shared a meal with them that we now call communion.

Jesus washes the feet of the disciples, and tells of his betrayal (John 13:1-10).

Mount of Olives: They left the upper room and went into the mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26), then into the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus is arrested.

Trial: Jesus is taken to the palace of the high priest where they put him on trial and find him guilty of death. He is then sent to the Roman governor to be sentenced.

This is where our lesson begins. Jesus has been accused by the priests and scribes, and tried by the high priest. He has been found guilty of death after a trial has gone on all through the night. In the morning the chief priests hold a consultation with the elders and scribes, and

Jesus is taken to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

In order to fully understand the situation, it is necessary to have an understanding of the government at the time of Christ. The Romans ruled over much of the civilized world at the time, and they were the ultimate authority in the land of Israel. However, they did not care to involve themselves in the particular matters of Jewish customs and laws. The Jews made their own rules regarding the religious laws and the law which Moses, the Mosaic law given to the people thousands of years before.

Even though the Jews ruled their own people through these laws, they did not have the authority to put Jesus to death. Their laws were ultimately subject to the Roman laws. Crucifixion was the punishment for Roman crimes. However, the Jews must submit to the Roman government, and therefore had to send Jesus to the Roman governor to request the death sentence for Jesus' "crimes."

All of this is taking place just before Passover. There is some debate among scholars about the exact timing of the death of Christ, and some events which changed the dates of Passover in this particular year in which Christ was crucified. It has been widely accepted that Christ was crucified on a Friday. It is clear from scripture that he rose on the first day of the week, which for the Jewish calendar would have been Sunday, as the Jews observe the sabbath on the seventh day of the week, Saturday.



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However, this is disputed at times because of the claim that,

Jesus would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40). A death on Friday would only be two nights in the grave, and discussion has been made for a crucifixion on a Thursday.

This information is for the teacher, to be shared with the students at your discretion. However, it is important to convey to the students that Jesus was crucified on Passover, as he is the scriptural fulfillment of the sacrificial lamb.

Jesus was led away from the high priest to the hall of judgment. It was early in the day, and the Jews did not go into the judgment hall on this day or they would be considered “defiled” and not be allowed to eat the Passover supper.

Since they would not come in, Pilate had to go out to them.

This was an example of the way that the Pharisees observed the Mosaic laws. Technically, they were obeying the law by not going **into** the judgment hall with Jesus. But they missed the whole point. The point of that law would be that it was defiling to bring judgment on the day of Passover. They were still placing judgment on Jesus by taking him to the judgment hall and asking Pilate to sentence him. But *legally* the Pharisees were obeying the law by not going *into* the judgment hall. Their actions defeated the whole purpose of the law in the first place, which was the heart of the commandment. It all goes back to loving your neighbor as yourself. If you loved someone and understood the meaning of loving others, you would not be placing judgment.

Pilate came out of the judgment hall and asked them what accusation they were bringing against Jesus. Passover was not observed by the Romans, so this made no difference to Pilate.

The Jews told Pilate that they would not have brought Jesus if he were not guilty. Pilate said, You take him and judge him according to your law. But the Jews responded that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death (John 18:30-31). There is some debate as exactly what this meant. Some scholars believe that they wanted to judge him by the Roman system because the Romans did not allow the Jews to sentence people to death. However, this is contradictory as there is evidence of stoning under Roman rule (Acts 7:59). Other scholars believe that they were speaking of the rules of sentencing on or near Passover.

Regardless, the result was that he would fulfill the prophecies that Christ would be “lifted up” on the cross and be crucified (John 12:32).

The Jews came to Pilate and said,

We found this man refusing to give taxes to Caesar, and saying he is Christ a King. They were lying about Jesus, and twisting his words. He told the disciples to pay taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25).

The chief priests and elders made many other accusations against Jesus and he answered nothing. Pilate asked him if he was going to answer. He said, They are saying many things against you. But Jesus still answered nothing, and Pilate was amazed.



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Pilate went back into the judgment hall and asked Jesus,

“Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, **“You have said so.”** Jesus asked him, “Did you say this of yourself, or did others tell you this about me? “

Pilate said, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation delivered you to me; what have you done?”

Jesus tells Pilate that his kingdom is not of this world, or he would fight. **But His kingdom is not from here.**

Pilate asked him again, “Are you a king?”

Jesus said, “You say I am a king. I was born to come into the world to testify of the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice.”

Pilate does not seem to understand.

He asks Jesus, “What is truth?”

Pilate goes back out to the Jews and says,

“I find no fault in this man,” (Luke 23:4; John 18:38).

The people became furious. They told Pilate that Jesus stirred up all the people from Galilee to Jerusalem.

When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he knew that Jesus would come under the jurisdiction of Herod. Herod would be the ruler of that region, and would have legal authority to make decisions regarding Jesus. So Pilate sent Jesus to Herod.

Pilate was very hesitant to make a ruling and did not want to make the final decision, as a man’s life was at stake. He gladly referred Jesus to Herod, hoping that Herod would handle the situation.

Herod was very excited to see Jesus. He had heard about Jesus, and was hoping to see him do some miracles.

Discuss:

How had Herod heard about Jesus?

Jesus was famous; news of Jesus had spread throughout the entire country.

Herod interrogated Jesus. He questioned him with many questions, and Jesus did not answer him one word. The chief priests and scribes stood and angrily accused Jesus. Herod and his military men mocked Jesus, and treated him with contempt.

Then they put a gorgeous robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate.

Discuss:

Why do you think they put this beautiful robe on him?

Was it to mock him and act as if he were a king?

After he was taken to Herod, Jesus was brought back to Pilate. Up until this time, Pilate and Herod had been enemies; but this event brought them together and they became friends.



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Pilate called all the chief priests and rulers together. He told the people, “you brought this man to me, **I have examined him, and found no fault concerning the things for which you accused him.**”

Pilate said, Neither Herod nor I found anything that he has done to be worthy of death. Pilate told them he would punish Jesus, and then release him.

It was the custom for the Roman governor to release a prisoner to the Jewish people at the feast of the Passover. The Jewish people got to choose which prisoner they wanted released. There was another man in prison at this time. His name was Barabbas, and he was in prison for starting an uprising and murdering someone during the revolt.

Pilate asked the people, Who do you want me to release to you? Barabbas? Or Jesus who is called Christ?

Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews? He said this because he knew that the chief priests had delivered him because they were envious of Jesus. But the chief priests persuaded the people to ask for the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus.

Pilate had Jesus scourged, or whipped. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on his head, and put a purple robe on him and mocked him. They said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they hit him with their hands.

He was crowned with a crown of thorns, and adorned with a regal robe. What was intended as mockery by the people essentially became the coronation ceremony for Jesus. His death and resurrection sealed his position as Lord and King.

Jesus came out wearing the robe and the crown of thorns, Pilate said, “Behold the man!”

The people all cried out, Away with this man (Jesus) ; release Barabbas! Then Pilate was still willing to release Jesus.

Again, the people cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!”

Then Pilate said, You take him and crucify him, I find no fault in him. But the Jews answered him,

“We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

When Pilate heard this, he was *more* afraid. Was he already afraid before this? He went back in the judgment hall.

Pilate asked Jesus, *Who are you?*

But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then Pilate said, Will you not speak to me? Don’t you know I have the power to crucify you, and the power to release you?

Then Jesus answered,,

“You would have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

After this, Pilate tried to release him.

The Jews told Pilate that if he released Jesus, he was not Caesar’s friend. Pilate may have been concerned about his government position. They told Pilate that since Jesus made himself a king, he was speaking against Caesar.



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When Pilate heard this, he sat down in the judgment seat in a place called the Pavement, in Hebrew Gabbatha.

When Pilate sat down in this judgment seat, his wife sent a message to him.

She told him to “have nothing to do with that just man.” She told Pilate she had suffered many things in a dream because of him.

Discuss:

How did Pilate’s wife hear about Jesus?

He was famous, and everyone in Jerusalem had probably heard about this.

This would have been the headline news of the day. They did not have television or radio like we do now, but news would have spread and people would have heard about this.

It was a big deal. Everyone knew who Jesus was.

Pilate’s wife was saying that she knew Jesus was innocent, and was warning Pilate not to have anything to do with him.

She is the only person to speak for, and not against, Jesus during this trial.

Pilate brought Jesus out, and said,

“Behold your King!”

But the people cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him!

Pilate asked the people a **third** time, Why? What evil has he done? I found no reason to sentence him to death; I will punish him and let him go.

But the people were angry. The crowd was loud, and demanding that he be crucified (Luke 23:22-23).

Pilate said, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests said, we have no king but Caesar.

Pilate saw that he could not convince the people, he took water and washed his hands in front of all the people. He said, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see you to it.”

And the people answered, “His blood be on us, and on our children.”

Wow. They do not realize what they are saying.

And Pilate, willing to please the people, sentenced him as they demanded, and released Barabbas to them (Mark 15:15; Luke 23:24-25).

The soldiers mocked him. They bowed down to him and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They spit on him. They took a reed, or stick, and hit him on the head, pushing the thorns into his head.

Then they took the purple robe off of him, and put his own clothes back on him, and led him away to crucify him.

Jesus in the Story



Jesus was the lamb of the Passover. He was the lamb sacrificed for our sins, the symbol of all sacrifices in the law. He was the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies; he fulfilled every commandment of the law perfectly, and was sacrificed despite his innocence.

The exchange of the guilty man, Barabbas, for the innocent Jesus, was symbolic of what Jesus was going to do on the cross. **He sacrificed his life for everyone, for all have sinned - becoming sin for us (Romans 3:23).**

It was our weaknesses he carried and our sorrows that weighed him down. We receive forgiveness and grace as Jesus was wounded for transgressions (rebellions), and crushed for our sins. **He was beaten so we could be whole and have peace, and he was whipped so that we would receive healing (Isaiah 53:4-7).**

He was oppressed and afflicted - they beat him and tortured him. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and did not defend himself, or say a word when the accusations were brought against him (Isaiah 53:7, Isaiah 50:6).

This is the culmination of the whole Old Testament.

This was prophesied in the garden, when God told Adam that the seed of the woman would strike the head of the serpent, and the serpent would strike his heel. This is Jesus. Satan thinks he has won, but Satan did not understand that this death was only the beginning. Through his death and resurrection Jesus was able to share his Spirit with all of his believers so that they could accomplish all that he did and more (John 14:12).

The thorns that the ground brought forth as the result of the fall of man (Genesis 3:18) are now placed on Jesus as a crown of thorns to redeem those who put their trust in him.

This crown of thorns becomes his coronation crown.

Jesus came to give us abundant life and his sufferings provided freedom for his followers (John 10:10).



Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

45. Falsely Accused

1. Have you ever been accused of something you did not do?
2. Did you think it was unfair?
3. What does Matthew 5:44 say to do to people who hate you and despise you?

1 John 3:4-5

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

46. When the Rooster Crows

1. In Mark 14:30, how many times did Jesus say the rooster would crow?
2. In Mark 14:70, why did they think Peter was with Jesus?
3. In Matthew 26:75 and Luke 22:62 what did Peter do after the rooster crowed?
4. In John 21, how many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him?

Romans 5:20

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.

47. Crucify Him!

Read Matthew 27:11-26; Mark 15:6-11

1. What was the first question that Pilate asked Jesus?
2. What would the governor do for the Jewish people at this feast?
3. Who was Barabbas?
4. What did Pilate's wife say?
5. What did Pilate do in front of all the people? (Matthew 27:24)

Isaiah 53:7

He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent so he opened not his mouth.

48. King of the Jews

Read John 19:17-42

1. What did Pilate write on the sign they placed over the head of Jesus on the cross?
2. Why were the priests upset about what he wrote?
3. When they pierced the side of Jesus, what came out?
4. Who came to take the body of Jesus, and who else came with spices to anoint the body?

John 3:14-15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.