



LESSON 21

Jesus prepares for His death

MATTHEW 26:1-56



Jesus died according to His own plan.



*“And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’”
(Matt 26:27–28).*

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus chose to die.
2. Jesus was in control of His death.
3. Jesus is worth worshipping.
4. Jesus died on Passover.
5. Jesus faced death through prayer.

Objectives

1. List two reasons Jesus chose to die.
2. List several aspects of His death that Jesus was in control of.
3. Contrast the attitudes of Mary and Judas toward Jesus.
4. Explain how Jesus provides a greater deliverance.
5. Contrast how Jesus and the disciples prepared for temptation.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Summary

The religious leaders plotted how to kill Jesus, but Jesus was a step ahead. He predicted His death would come in two days, and He accepted Mary's perfume as an anointing for burial. During the Passover meal, Jesus explained that His body would be beaten and His blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. He knew He would be deserted, arrested, and killed, and He had the power to prevent it. Instead, He prayed and voluntarily chose to submit to God's will.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Because Jesus willingly gave up His life, He is able to offer forgiveness of sins. While the blood of the original Passover lambs saved the lives of the firstborn Israelites, Jesus' blood gives eternal life to everyone who believes. Eternal life is only for those who worship Jesus as their great love. They are not perfect, but through failure they realize their weakness. They stop depending on themselves and instead cling to Christ alone.

LAST WEEK



**Jesus teaches the parable
of the talents**

Matthew 25:14-30

THIS WEEK



**Jesus prepares for His
death**

Matthew 26:1-56

NEXT WEEK



**The trial and denial of
Jesus**

Mark 14:53-15:15

THE PASSION WEEK OF JESUS

Lesson Commentary

Jesus died according to His own plan.

Jesus announced His death several times (Matt 16:21; 17:9; 20:18), and He had just finished teaching His disciples how to live while He was away (Matt 24–25). Jesus was not surprised by His death. He was not a helpless teacher trapped by powerful enemies. He was in control, sovereignly planning and determining the time of His own death.

Jesus controlled the preparation for His death (26:1-25)

Jesus planned to be crucified on *Passover* (26:1–2), a celebration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Passover was especially a reminder of how God spared the firstborn in every house marked with the blood of an unblemished lamb (Exod 12:3–6, 22–23). So Jesus would be the perfect Passover Lamb (John 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7), dying to deliver people from sin and death. But how could this happen exactly on Passover? Jesus' enemies tried to kill Him in Bethlehem as an infant (2:13), in Nazareth at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 4:16–30), and in Jerusalem after He healed on the Sabbath (John 5:18; 7:44–46). The one day they did not want to kill Him was Passover (Matt 26:5)! Yet they never had any power over Jesus' life. Instead, Jesus gave His life at the right time by His own authority (John 10:18).

Four days earlier (12:1), Jesus had confirmed He would die soon. He was enjoying the Sabbath in Bethany, just over the ridge from Jerusalem, when Lazarus' sister Mary anointed His head and feet (Matt 26:6–7; John 12:3). Her *alabaster* vial was carved out of white marble from Egypt. Inside was pure *nard*, a valuable perfume from the roots of a flower found in the mountains of India and China. It was worth almost a year's wages (John 12:5)! How could Jesus allow this when He had just emphasized caring for the poor (Matt 25:35–40; 26:8–9)? Yet what the disciples called a waste Jesus called beautiful (26:10), for Mary was preparing for the most important event in all of history, Jesus' voluntary death on behalf of sinners (26:12–13).

Mary loved Jesus more than her most precious possession, but Judas sold Jesus for a third of that (26:14–16). Maybe Judas was eager to follow Jesus at first, but now it's clear he never really loved Jesus. He was only following Jesus for his own earthly benefit. It is no surprise he began stealing from the group's moneybag (John 12:6). In the end, 30 shekels of silver was worth more to him than the Lord (Matt 26:15–16). This was the price of a slave in the Old Testament (Exod 21:32; Zech 11:12), worth 120 denarii, about 4 month's wages. This is terrible treachery, yet how often do we act unfaithfully to get even less?

Yet Jesus, not Judas, was in control. Jesus kept the place of the Passover meal secret so that Judas would not betray Him before He could explain the meaning of His death (Matt 26:17–18; Luke 22:8). Then at the right time, Jesus prompted Judas to act quickly and betray Him that very night (Matt 26:20–25; John 13:27). But how could Jesus eat the Passover meal and still die on Passover? It seems the Pharisees and Galileans celebrated Passover one day earlier than the Sadducees and Judeans. This allowed Jesus, a Galilean, to show the meaning of the Passover meal on Thursday evening, while still dying at the time the Sadducees' lambs were being sacrificed on Friday afternoon. It was all under Jesus' control.

Jesus controlled the significance of His death (26:26–35)

Jesus even changed the meaning of the Passover meal. The unleavened bread used to symbolize Israel quickly leaving idolatrous Egypt, but now it symbolizes Christ's own body (Matt 26:26). The wine used to celebrate the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai (Exod 24:8), but now it celebrates the new covenant sealed by the blood of Jesus (Matt 26:28). Despite these startling changes, the Messiah's battered body and poured-out blood had been predicted long ago (Isa 53:5–7; Ps 22:14–16). As had the new covenant

THINK ABOUT IT
True worship flows out of a deep love for Jesus.



THINK ABOUT IT
Those motivated by greed will not enter Christ's kingdom (Eph 5:5).



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THINK ABOUT IT

The Lord's Supper celebrates a new exodus: freedom from sin.

Even the disciples deserting Jesus was according to plan, prophesied long ago (26:31; Zech 13:7). Jesus was not surprised. As the good shepherd, He offered hope to His confused sheep (Matt 26:32). Unfortunately, the disciples were blinded by *pride*. Peter shows that pride is *thinking we know better* even than Jesus, *thinking we are better than others*, and *being self-confident*. He thought he loved Jesus more than he really did. As long as Peter relied on his own strength, he would be doomed to failure (1 Cor 10:12). So before the disciples could be the church's first leaders, they needed to realize their human weakness. As a result, Jesus would let them be

which brings forgiveness of sins for many people (Isa 53:11–12; Jer 31:31–34; Matt 1:21). Jesus was doing everything according to plan.

broken and weak, so that the power of Christ could live in them (Matt 26:34; 2 Cor 1:9; 12:9–10). So even in being deserted, Jesus was in control, proving that He is the good Shepherd.



THINK ABOUT IT

Realize how weak you really are and depend entirely on God (Jude 21, 24).

Jesus controlled His flesh in His death (26:36–56)

Even though Jesus' death was God's plan and His own choice, it was still a terrible struggle. As a human, Jesus was weighed down by the physical suffering and death He was facing (Matt 26:37). In addition, He knew He was going to drink "the cup," which meant that He would bear God's awful wrath (26:39; Isa 51:17). He knew He would become sin and be treated like a sinner (2 Cor 5:21), even though He was sinless and hated sin (1 Pet 2:22; Ps 119:104). He was facing His biggest test: controlling His own human nature.

Unlike His disciples, Jesus knew the weakness of human nature. The disciples show that self-confidence leads to

distraction, distraction to temptation, temptation to sin, and sin to disaster (Matt 26:40–41, 51). Unlike them, Jesus humbly depended on the Father in prayer. First, He spent time alone in prayer before temptation came. Second, He spoke plainly to God about His suffering and need (26:39; Phil 4:6; 1 Pet 5:7). Third, He cared more about God's will than about His own desires (Matt 26:42; 6:10). Fourth, He kept praying without giving up (26:44; Rom 12:12). God answers that kind of prayer. Because Jesus drew near to God, God drew near to Him (Jas 4:8).

God did not take the cross away, but He did give Jesus victory over temptation when Judas came to betray Him (Matt 26:47). Jesus had a good excuse to resist, since His arrest was completely wrong. Judas was a traitor, but on top of that, he was offensive. He kissed Jesus, even though it was not proper for a student to kiss his teacher without the teacher doing so first. He also called Jesus "Rabbi," or teacher, a term that only Jesus' enemies use in the book of Matthew. Not only was Judas an insulting traitor, but the crowd was also wicked. They were unjust in treating Jesus like a criminal, and they were cowards, afraid to arrest Him openly (26:55). Judas and the mob deserved arrest, not Jesus.

If that's true, then why didn't Jesus fight back like Peter did? Peter attacked the high priest's slave, who would have been a very important person (26:51). This might seem brave, but Peter was still unprepared, impatient, and self-confident. His action was harmful and illegal (26:52). It was also silly, since Jesus could have commanded thousands of *angels, heaven's fiery warriors*, to fight for Him (26:53)—and just one angel was enough to wipe out a massive army (2 Kgs 19:35)! But most importantly, Peter's action was wrong, because it was going against God's will (Matt 26:54). In the end, Jesus submitted not to the power of His enemies, but to the will of God (26:56). Far from being a helpless victim, Jesus was in control. He was a willing sacrifice, dying to set us free.

Lesson Outline

Jesus died according to His own plan.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus chose to die at the right time (26:1-25).
2. Jesus chose to die to set sinners free (26:26–35).
3. Jesus chose to die to obey His Father (26:36–56).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus controlled the preparation for His death (26:1–25).
 - Jesus upset the leaders' plans (26:1–5).
 - Jesus affirmed Mary's offering (26:6–13).
 - Jesus used Judas' betrayal (26:14–25).
2. Jesus controlled the significance of His death (26:26–35).
 - Jesus is the Passover substitute (26:26–30).
 - Jesus is the great Shepherd (26:31–35).
3. Jesus controlled His flesh in His death (26:36–56).
 - Jesus submitted to the Father in prayer (26:36–46).
 - Jesus submitted to Scripture in His arrest (26:47–56).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What day did Jesus plan to die on?**
Passover.
- 2. What is Passover?**
It is a meal when Israelites killed a lamb to celebrate how God rescued them from Egypt.
- 3. What did Jesus say about the bread and the wine?**
He said the bread was like His body and the wine was like His blood.
- 4. Why did Jesus choose to die?**
To provide forgiveness of sins and to obey the Father.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Did the Pharisees want to kill Jesus during Passover?**
No. They were afraid of the crowds.
- 2. What did Mary do for Jesus?**
She anointed His head and washed His feet with very expensive perfume.
- 3. What did Jesus say about this?**
He said it was the right thing to do, because it was anointing Him for burial.
- 4. How much did Judas agree to betray Jesus for?**
For thirty pieces of silver, worth about 4 months' wages or a few thousand dollars.
- 5. How did Jesus control the time of His arrest?**
First, He hid the place of the Passover meal. Then He prompted Judas to betray Him during the night by showing He knew about a traitor.
- 6. Why would the disciples desert Jesus?**
It was prophesied that the Shepherd would be killed and His sheep scattered. Also, the disciples were too confident in themselves, so they did not prepare for temptation.
- 7. What did Jesus do right before being arrested?**
He prayed and submitted to the Father's will.
- 8. Why did Jesus not resist arrest?**
Even though He had the power to defeat His enemies, He chose to obey Scripture.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

WHAT IS PATIENCE?

How do the children feel the night before Christmas or their birthday? How about the night before something scary like going to the doctor to get a shot? Patience is waiting with a happy heart. In today's lesson, Jesus shows great patience. In just a few days, Jesus would die on the cross as a sacrifice for sin. Yet although He knew it would be a difficult event, Jesus waited patiently and obeyed God's will for His life. Jesus displays this same patience towards sinners, allowing them time to repent (Rom 2:4).

WHAT DO FRIENDS DO?

Ask the children what a friend is. Ask them what kinds of things they like to do with their friends. What does a good friend do? Does a good friend lie about his friends? Does a good friend get his friends in trouble? Ask them what kind of friend they want to be. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about one of Jesus' friends who acted like His enemy.



ILLUSTRATE

THE PASSOVER MEAL

See the detailed description of a Passover meal in Year 2, Lesson 45. Use this to add vividness to your description for the children. You might even bring in certain elements as visual aids.

TIME LINE

Today's lesson is all about timing. Create a time line of the events of today's lesson. As you teach through the lesson, place pictures of objects such as coins, bread and wine, praying hands, ears, lips, rooster, etc. along the time-line at key points in the lesson.



APPLY

THE PERFUME OF WORSHIP

See *Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheet, cardstock, crayons, glue stick, scissors, yarn, tan construction paper.

Directions: Photocopy the craft page on cardstock. Color the images, glue the two sides of the bottle together. Glue the writing on the bottle. Cut a cork shaped-form from the construction paper. Glue the yarn in the back of the cork and then tie it to the neck of the bottle.



The Perfume of Worship
See *Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1*

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

GIFTS OF LOVE

Ask the children what they think of when they see someone give flowers to someone else. Often it means that one person loves another. People often give gifts to show that they love others. On Christmas people give gifts to say that they love their family and friends. In today's lesson, we will learn about a woman named Mary who gave an extremely valuable gift because of her love for her Savior.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Have you ever been a part of a surprise party? If you have, you'll know that timing is everything. Plans must be made when the person isn't around. The venue must be prepared while the person is absent. All the guests must arrive before the person, and the person must be available to attend the party. When the person arrives, the lights must be flipped on and everyone shout "Happy Birthday" just as the person opens the door. Timing was also central to Jesus' death. In today's lesson, we will learn how Jesus planned the timing of His death to coincide with the sacrificing of the Passover lambs.



ILLUSTRATE

FRIENDSHIP TEST

Have the children think of friends and enemies of God from previous Bible lessons. For example, friends: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David; enemies: Cain, Men of Sodom, Pharaoh. Discuss the reasons why some were friends of God and others were enemies.

CUP OF WRATH

Normally when we think of a cup, it is in connection with a nice, cold, refreshing drink. Pour some cold water into a clear glass in front of the children and take a drink. However, when Jesus mentioned the "cup" in today's lesson, He was referring to the terrible wrath of God that He would bear as a sin offering (Matt 26:39; Isa 51:17). Drop a few drops of dark food coloring into your water to represent God's anger over sin and take a drink in front of the children. Jesus would bear all of God's anger against sin, draining the cup dry.

Jesus Prepares for His Death
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



APPLY

JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS DEATH

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, construction paper, crayons, glue stick, scissors, yarn, tape.

Directions: Color the images with crayons and fold the page in four. Cut two rectangles of the same size of the folded page, and glue them on the it. Glue on the first page "Jesus prepares for His death" and on the last page the verse. Cut two pieces of yarn and tape them in the inside white pages to close the book with a tie.



AGES 9–11



TRUE VALUE

Old computers are practically worthless, so people often just throw them away. That is just what James Howells did in England. The trash truck came, and the computer was gone. Later, he realized that a kind of electronic money (bitcoin) was stored on the computer. That digital money had become very valuable—there were 4 million dollars on the hard drive! He had just thrown away enough money to last him a lifetime because he misjudged the value of that computer. Have you correctly judged the value of Jesus?

FAILURE TO PRAY IS PLANNING TO FAIL

Because the disciples failed to pray, they were weak and unable to resist sin's temptation (Matt 26:40–41, 51). By failing to pray, they failed to prepare for the spiritual battle raging all around them (Eph 6:18). There were like a football player running onto the field without a helmet (hold up helmet), or a soccer player rushing into the game with shin guards (hold up shin guards), or a marathon runner standing on the starting line barefoot (hold up shoes and socks). They were so unprepared. And we are too, when we fail to pray.



DEVOTION

How do we show our devotion? Is it by breaking a bottle of perfume or cologne and pouring its contents on someone's head and feet? Show the children a bottle of perfume and cologne and pretend to do this. This is how Mary showed her devotion to Jesus, but how do we show ours? Talk about different ways we show devotion to Jesus: time in Bible and prayer, obedience to parents, sharing salvation with family and friends, etc.

SELF-RESTRAINT

Jesus said He could call down 12 legions of angels. A full-strength Roman legion usually contained about 6,000 soldiers, so that makes 72,000 angels. And just one angel was able to kill 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (2 Kgs 19:35)! Jesus could command these angels because as the Son of God, He was in charge of the armies of heaven. So why didn't He?



THE PURPOSE OF PATIENCE

Jesus demonstrated incredible patience during His betrayal and arrest. He allowed Judas, a member of His inner circle, to betray Him to the religious leaders. He endured Judas's offensive kiss, the wicked crowds, and the hypocritical religious leaders. He could have easily resisted their arrest with his own army—72,000 fiery angels. But He did not. He allowed them to go through with their unjust arrest in order that Scripture might be fulfilled (Matt 26:54). He was obedient to His Father and patient with sinful men. This patience gave Judas, the crowds, and the religious leaders time to repent (Rom 2:4). And God has shown this same kindness to you. Have you responded to God's kindness and patience by repenting of your sin? If you have, do you live each day in light of the grace God has shown you through Jesus Christ?