



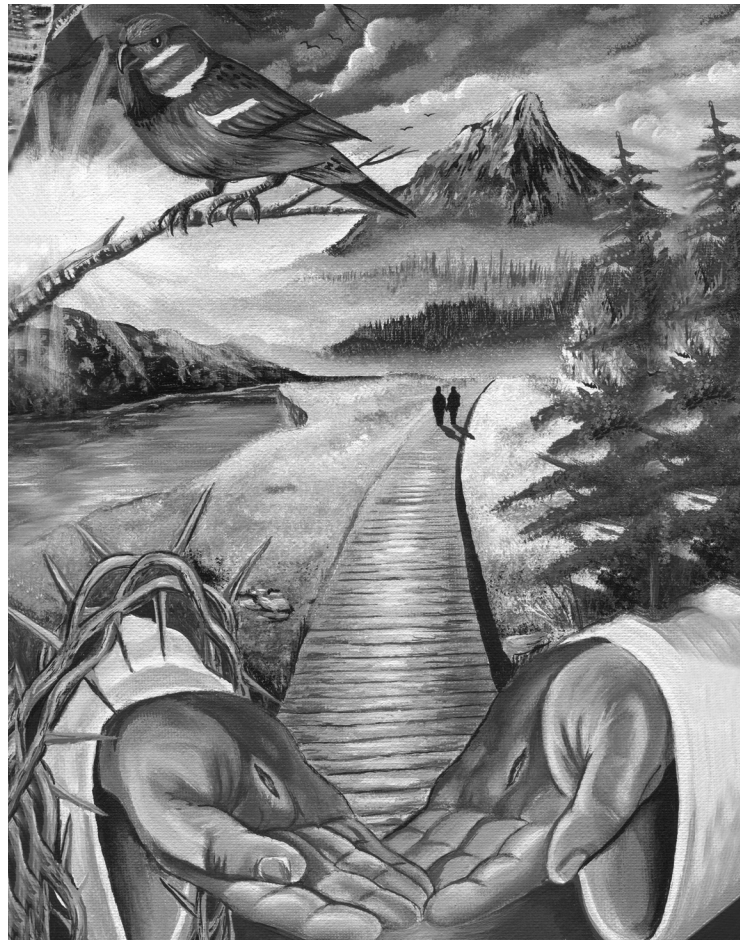
# WHO IS JESUS?

## LESSON 4: Jesus Saves the World

### Lesson Focus:

**Jesus' death saved the world from sin.**

The book of Luke includes many amazing events that happened during Jesus' lifetime. Angels told shepherds about Jesus' birth. God spoke from heaven to tell people that Jesus was His Son. Jesus spoke with God's most powerful prophets from the Old Testament. People began to follow Jesus and listen to His message. And Jesus taught them what it meant to truly love God and others.



**Artwork by Vincent M., former Crossroads student**

The next event Luke described happened after Jesus and His disciples had completed their journey to Jerusalem. They were getting ready to enter the city to celebrate Passover.\* If this were an ordinary story, we could guess what would happen next: Jesus would ride a big white horse into Jerusalem. He would gather the people. They would grab weapons and defeat the Romans. They would arrest the religious leaders and take over the city. The people would cheer, and Jesus would be king. But what happened next was not what anyone expected.

1. What story have you heard, read, or watched that had a completely different ending than you expected?

## Jesus Arrives in Jerusalem

Before entering Jerusalem, Jesus told His disciples to find a donkey. Then He rode the donkey into the city. Israel's ancient prophets had promised that a king would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. They had also promised that one day God Himself would arrive in Jerusalem. He would come as the Savior\* of His people and

---

\* An asterisk after a word or phrase indicates that it is defined in the Glossary of Terms on page 7.

bring justice and peace. The people had seen Jesus do amazing things—things only God could do. When they saw Him riding a donkey, they hoped He was coming to lead them to victory over Rome.

Read **Luke 19:28–44**.

2. How did the crowd react as Jesus rode toward Jerusalem?

Not everyone was excited about Jesus' arrival. The religious leaders were not celebrating; they were angry. They were worried that Jesus would take away their power. The people had started listening to Jesus instead of listening to them.

Jesus was not happy either. He was crying as He rode into the city. Jesus knew that the people did not understand who He was or what He was coming to do. They would not accept the peace and hope He offered to those who followed Him. They were going to keep fighting Rome, and their city would be burned to the ground—and that broke His heart.



Video stills courtesy of BibleProject

## Jesus Enters the Temple

After Jesus entered Jerusalem, He headed straight to the temple. He marched into the temple courts and chased out the money changers.\* They had been stealing from the people who came to worship in God's temple. The religious leaders knew that this was happening, but they had done nothing to stop it.

Jesus was angry that people were being cheated in God's temple. He was even angrier that the religious leaders were allowing it. He flipped over the money changers' tables and threw their money on the ground as a prophetic protest.\* He stood in the center of the crowds that were gathered for Passover and shouted words from Israel's ancient prophets: "It is written . . . 'My house will be a house where people can pray.' But you have made it a 'den for robbers'" (Luke 19:46).

Jesus was quoting the prophet Jeremiah (jer-eh-MAI-uh). Jeremiah had stood in that same spot in the temple more than a thousand years earlier and said the same thing to Israel's leaders because they were rebellious\* and corrupt.\* They were not serving God; they were serving themselves.



Notes/Questions

3. What do you think it would have been like to see Jesus confront the religious leaders?

The religious leaders knew what Jesus was saying to them, but they didn't listen to Him because they were too afraid of losing their power. They wanted to kill Him, but they could not figure out how to do it. The crowds around Jesus were too big, so He was never alone.

Jesus knew that the leaders wanted to kill Him. But He also knew that it was God's plan and that it would happen during Passover. Passover was a celebration of God saving His people, and that was exactly what Jesus had come to do.

God commanded His people to celebrate Passover each year. It was a reminder of how God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt hundreds of years before (see Exodus 1:1–12:51). People would travel for weeks to reach Jerusalem for the festival. Every family had to go to the temple, sacrifice\* a lamb, and ask for God's forgiveness. Then they would celebrate. They would eat the lamb, drink wine, and break bread together. Everything they ate had meaning. The sacrificed lamb reminded them of God's forgiveness. The bread reminded them that God led His people out of slavery from Egypt and into freedom. The wine reminded them that God had made a covenant\* (KUH-vah-nunt) with them. He had promised to be their God, and they had promised to be His people.

Jesus and His disciples celebrated Passover too. They knew the meaning of the meal, and they remembered the promises connected to it. However, Jesus was going to show the disciples a new way to understand the bread and the wine.

Read **Luke 22:1–30**.

4. What did Jesus say would happen to Him (see verses 14–23)?

During the meal, Jesus used the bread and wine to tell the disciples why He was going to suffer and die. He said the broken bread was His broken body. He said the wine was His blood.

Jesus was telling the disciples He was going to be the final sacrifice on Passover. Sacrificing lambs to God would no longer be necessary for forgiveness. That was why Jesus came to earth. He had never sinned, but He



## Notes/Questions

was going to die to pay for the sins of all humankind. He would make it possible for anyone who followed Him to experience God's forgiveness. He would make a way for them to have a new relationship with God. Jesus would do more than save them from death—He was going to give them the gift of eternal life with God.

## Jesus Goes to Pray

After the meal, Jesus took His disciples to a garden to pray. Jesus knew that He needed to die to finish what He came to do. But He still struggled with the very human desire to avoid death. He knew He was going to face horrible pain and rejection. He did not want to experience those things. But He wanted to follow God's plan. So, He talked to God.

Jesus was still praying in the garden when the religious leaders found Him and arrested Him.

Read **Luke 22:39–46**.

5. What was the last thing Jesus said in His prayer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What can we learn from the way Jesus prayed when He was struggling?

## The Trial and Sentence

Because Jerusalem was ruled by the Roman Empire, the religious leaders could not execute Jesus themselves. They had to get permission from their governor, Pontius Pilate (PAHN-shus PAI-luht). The leaders made up a charge that Jesus was a rebel\* king. They said He was telling people to fight against the Roman Empire. Pilate was not sure they were telling him the whole truth. So, Pilate asked Jesus if He was really a king.

And Jesus answered, "You have said so" (Luke 23:3).



Video stills courtesy of BibleProject

Pilate believed that Jesus was innocent. He knew that Jesus did not deserve to die, so he offered to let Jesus go. But the religious leaders argued that He was dangerous. They asked Pilate to release a man named Barabbas instead. Barabbas was guilty, and Jesus was innocent. But Pilate agreed, and Jesus was the one taken away to be crucified.\*

Pilate handed Jesus over to the guards. They beat Him and dressed Him like a fake king. They pushed a crown made of thorns onto His head. Then they nailed Him to a Roman execution device—a cross. And as He hung there, the people mocked Him. *If You're the promised king, save Yourself!*

Even though they made fun of Him and wanted Him to die, Jesus loved His enemies to the very end. He gave hope to one of the criminals who was crucified beside Him. And He even prayed for the men executing Him, saying, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Then the sky turned dark. Jesus cried out with ancient words from the Psalms: "Father, into your hands I commit my life" (Luke 23:46).

Then Jesus died. At that moment, He paid the price for all our sins. And no one came to save Him.

Read **Luke 23:26–49**.

7. The Bible tells us that Jesus died on the cross for all of us to pay for our sins. What does that mean for you?

## Not the End

Jesus' death seemed like an ending. He was gone. His body was buried in a tomb. Almost everyone had given up on Him. But then, something amazing and unexpected happened. Two of God's angel messengers appeared to the women who went to care for Jesus' body, saying, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? Jesus is not here! He has risen!" (Luke 24:5–6). The angels reminded them that Jesus had said that all of those things would happen.

The women left in shock and ran to tell the disciples what they had seen and heard. The tomb was empty! Jesus was gone! The disciples did not believe it at first. They wondered how it could be possible.

The same day, two of Jesus' followers left Jerusalem. They began traveling toward a town called Emmaus (eh-MAY-uhs). They were still discussing what had happened to Jesus. They were completely confused. Then, Jesus appeared and walked alongside them. But for some reason, they did not recognize Him.

Read **Luke 24:13–35**.

8. Why do you think Jesus' followers were still struggling to understand what happened to Him?

9. What are some reasons that people today fail to understand who Jesus really is?

## Who Is Jesus?

The book of Luke ends with a reminder that Jesus is both God and King. The last chapter of Luke says that Jesus rose from the dead and was later taken into heaven and surrounded by God's glory. But before He left earth, He took time to care for His people. Jesus met with His disciples and blessed them. He reminded them of everything He taught them, and He promised that His Kingdom was still coming. He also promised to send the Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of everyone who followed Him. Even then, the disciples did not understand what was happening. It was not until later, when they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, that they finally understood.

Luke's book shows how hard it was for the people around Jesus to see Him for who He truly was. The religious leaders knew Scripture. But they did not recognize that Jesus was the King that God had chosen for His people. Even the disciples, who spent every day with Him, failed to see that He was keeping every promise God had made about the Messiah and King.

That is why God inspired Luke to write his book. God wanted people to know that what they heard about Jesus was true. God wanted them to understand that Jesus was more than a prophet or a teacher. He was even more than the King that God had promised would come. He was greater than all the people's expectations. Jesus was God on earth. He was the Savior who came to defeat death and rule forever. Out of His great love for us, He came to earth to live, die, and rise again so that we could experience God's forgiveness. He made it possible for each of us to have a relationship with God and experience the freedom of living with Him for eternity.\* Jesus was God and man, and He came to do what no one else could. He came to save us.

10. Based on everything you have read and learned in this course, who do you say Jesus is?

## Action Step

Write down something new that you learned about Jesus from this lesson or course, and then share it with someone else. How did they respond? What did you talk about as a result?



## Glossary of Terms

**Each lesson contains Bible names, terms, and ideas that may be new to you. We will do our best to provide definitions that are easy to understand. You will see an asterisk (\*) the first time each term appears in the lesson.**

**Corrupt** — Characterized by dishonest or evil behavior.

**Covenant** — An agreement or contract between two people or groups of people.

**Crucify** — To put someone to death by nailing or tying their wrists or hands and feet to a cross.

**Eternity** — An endless amount of time with no beginning or end.

**Money changer** — Someone whose business is to help people trade one kind of money for another. In Jesus' time, people came from many different countries to worship at God's temple. They needed to have the right kind of money so they could buy things to sacrifice (see "**sacrifice**") to God.

**Passover** — A holiday that celebrates God's people being freed from slavery in Egypt.

**Prophetic protest** — The actions of a prophet, on behalf of God, that point out evil things that a person or group (usually one in power) is doing.

**Rebel** — Someone who does not obey authority or who fights against the government.

**Rebellious** — In opposition or disobedient to someone who has authority or control.

**Sacrifice** — To give something to God. For many years, the people of Israel sacrificed animals in the temple as a way to receive forgiveness from God. Jesus later became the final sacrifice, making all other forms of sacrifice unnecessary.

**Savior** — Someone who saves others from danger or death.



Video stills courtesy of BibleProject

Images and ideas within this course have been excerpted from BibleProject's video miniseries "Luke-Acts." The Luke-Acts miniseries is copyright © 2017, 2020 by BibleProject and is available for viewing at [www.bibleproject.com](http://www.bibleproject.com). All BibleProject videos and resources are provided for free and any derivative works are to be provided for free to others. Crossroads is deeply thankful to BibleProject for generously granting Crossroads permission to use their materials for this course.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Reader's Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com). The "NIV" and "New International Reader's Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

v.0624

International Office: **Crossroads | PO Box 900 | Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900**

Use this space for **prayer requests, questions for the mentor who will review this lesson, or comments.**  
You can also use this space to **write a poem or draw.**

☐ If your address has changed, please mark this box and write your *new* address below.

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ID#
INSTITUTION	HOUSING UNIT	
STREET ADDRESS / PO BOX		
CITY	STATE	ZIP