

The Murder of Jesus

Study Questions

Chapter One

1. The Jewish people have often been “blamed” for the murder of Jesus, but what other factions were involved?
2. Isaiah 53:10 says that it pleased the Lord to bruise Jesus. Why would God be pleased at this?
3. Why was the timing of Jesus’ crucifixion significant?
4. Describe other times, prior to the crucifixion, when attempts were made to kill Jesus. Why did they not succeed (John 10:18)?
5. What may have been some of Judas’s motives for betraying Jesus?
6. What are some of the accounts that display God’s sovereign control in the days leading up to Christ’s crucifixion?
7. If God was sovereignly in control when His beloved Son was murdered, can you trust Him to be in control of the events occurring in the world today? In your life today? What do you need to entrust to Him?

Chapter Two

1. How did the Passover feast originate? How did the Jews celebrate it at the time of Christ?
2. What were the chief elements at a Passover Seder? What did they represent?
3. Why was the Passover meal that Jesus celebrated with His disciples so significant?
4. Why did Jesus wash His disciples’ feet? What did He want to teach them?
5. What indications suggest that Judas enjoyed a special measure of trust?
6. What did Jesus mean when He called the bread His “body”?
7. When Jesus took the cup, He said, “For this is My blood of the new covenant.” Why did He say this? What did He mean?

8. Read John 17, the prayer Jesus gave to conclude the Passover feast. What are some of the requests Jesus made, not only for His twelve disciples, but also for His disciples today?

Chapter Three

1. How did the disciples respond when Jesus told them they would deny Him? What were they putting their trust in?
2. Read Ephesians 6:12. Peter tells Christ, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." Describe the type of battle Peter saw ahead of them versus what Christ saw.
3. What did Jesus pray for His disciples (Luke 22:32)? How was that prayer fulfilled in their lives?
4. Describe the characteristics of the disciples after Pentecost. Why were they so different?
5. Why did Jesus make a point of asking Peter three times if he loved Him?
6. When have you put your confidence in your own strength instead of in Christ? What were the results?

Chapter Four

1. Scripture depicts Jesus as having many human attributes. What were some of them?
2. Read Hebrews 4:15. Why is it significant that, in addition to being fully God, Jesus was fully human?
3. Why did Jesus bring Peter, James, and John with Him to the garden?
4. Jesus prays, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." What is the "cup" that He dreads?
5. What was the ultimate petition of Jesus' prayer in the garden?
6. According to Titus 1:1–2 and 2 Timothy 1:9, when did God make the promise of eternal life? To whom did He promise it?
7. Have you ever considered that God had a plan for your redemption even before time began? What is your reaction to this truth?

Chapter Five

1. Who accompanied Judas to the Garden of Gethsemane?
2. Why did the chief priests send such a large crowd?
3. Why did they arrest Jesus in the middle of the night?
4. How did Judas signal whom to betray? Why was this signal particularly cruel?
5. Why did Jesus rebuke Peter for using his sword?
6. Jesus supernaturally caused the entire mob to fall to the ground and He healed Malchus's ear, yet neither of these miracles deterred the crowd. Why? (Consider Genesis 19:10–11.)
7. Describe Christ's demeanor throughout the chaos of His arrest.
8. On the night of Jesus' arrest, the disciples became so overwhelmed with the circumstances unfolding around them that they forgot the reassuring promises Jesus had given them. When have circumstances caused you to forget God's promises? When have God's promises comforted you during fearful circumstances?

Chapter Six

1. During Jesus' time, Israel was a theocracy. Describe how this type of government worked. Who were Israel's legal experts?
2. What legal principles did the Sanhedrin council violate in order to condemn Jesus?
3. Which two disciples followed Jesus to the high priest's courtyard?
4. What reasons might the high priest Annas have had for seeing Jesus killed?
5. Two false witnesses testified similarly against Jesus. What were their claims against Him?
6. How did Caiaphus interpret Jesus' statement that He would destroy the temple and raise it up three days later? What did Jesus actually mean?
7. On what grounds did the Sanhedrin council ultimately decide Jesus deserved to die?

8. Christ relinquished all His rights while on earth in order to glorify His Father. Both in word and deed He demonstrated complete humility again and again. Read Philippians 2:3–11. Considering Jesus had the right, as the Son of God, to be treated as a King rather than endure the humiliation of the cross, how does His demonstration of humility speak to you? In what areas of your life do you need to relinquish your rights and “empty” yourself for the glory of God?

Chapter Seven

1. Even after the disciples had abandoned Jesus, how did God’s grace uniquely equip them for future ministry?
2. Contrast Judas’s betrayal of Christ with Peter’s denial of Him. Why was one a defeat and the other, ultimately, a victory?
3. How was Peter’s denial of Jesus a gradual defeat? What steps in his life led up to the life-changing failure the night of Jesus’s trial?
4. Describe Peter’s reaction when he realized Jesus’ prophecy of his denial had been fulfilled. What evidence do we have of his repentance being genuine?
5. What do all four gospels highlight in recounting Peter’s failure?
6. According to 1 Peter 1:3–7, where does Peter testify that our security rests?
7. What “various trials” has God used to strengthen “the genuineness of your faith”? Do you see that your victory in them has further equipped you to serve Him?

Chapter Eight

1. Why did people have such differing opinions as to who Jesus was?
2. After they gave their verdict, why did the Sanhedrin council send Jesus to Pontius Pilate?
3. Why was Judas’s crime against Jesus particularly heinous?
4. Why did Judas feel remorse when he realized Jesus had been condemned?
5. What steps did Judas take to attempt to deal with his sin?

6. How did members of the Sanhedrin council demonstrate hypocrisy when they refused to put the blood money in the treasury?
7. What did Jesus mean when He likened the Jewish religious leaders to “whitewashed tombs”?
8. Read Jeremiah 9:23–24. If you are going to be proud of something, what does God want you to be proud of? Like the Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day, are you boasting in outward appearances or delighting in the reality that you truly “know and understand” God?

Chapter Nine

1. Why did the Sanhedrin council not enter Pilate’s home?
2. Why did the Sanhedrin want a Roman execution rather than stoning Jesus themselves?
3. How did the Sanhedrin attempt to portray Christ to Pilate so he would order His death?
4. What was Pilate’s predicament?
5. How did Philo describe Pilate?
6. Why did Pilate send Jesus to Herod? Why was Herod eager to see Jesus? How did he treat Him?
7. Why did Pilate’s wife send word that Pilate should “have nothing to do” with Jesus?
8. What measures did Pilate take to avoid crucifying Jesus? How did the crowd respond?
9. Why did Pilate wash his hands before the multitude?
10. Throughout His trial, Jesus responded to Pilate’s and Herod’s questionings, the mocking, and unjust accusations with a calm, sometimes silent, demeanor. How do you think you would respond under similar circumstances? What have you learned from Christ’s attitude toward those who mocked Him? How can you apply the things you have learned to situations you face today?

Chapter Ten

1. How did the Roman soldiers mock Jesus?
2. What did the robe, crown of thorns, and reed symbolize?

3. Who was chosen to carry Jesus' cross? Why was it ultimately significant that he was chosen?
4. Why did the Romans crucify their victims along major thoroughfares?
5. Describe the location where Jesus was crucified. What does *Calvary* mean?
6. What did the soldiers offer Jesus to drink? Why did He refuse it?
7. Why did the Roman soldiers drive the iron nails through a victim's wrists rather than hands?
8. How did crucifixions maximize a victim's pain?
9. How did the Roman soldiers, Pilate, the onlookers, and the thieves seek to humiliate Christ?
10. Have you ever considered, in this much detail, the suffering Jesus endured for your salvation? What is your reaction to what He endured?

Chapter Eleven

1. Why did Jesus pray, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do"? How was this prayer answered?
2. Describe the transformation that took place in one of the thief's hearts. What did Jesus promise him?
3. Whom did Jesus delegate to care for His mother? Why did He not choose one of His brothers?
4. How is the true meaning of the cross found in the utterance, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
5. What caused the greatest amount of suffering for Christ on the cross?
6. What is the significance of Christ crying out, "It is finished"?
7. How did Jesus' final words from the cross depict, once again, that He was sovereignly in control?
8. Of the seven last sayings of Christ, which speaks most poignantly to your heart? Why?

Chapter Twelve

1. What were some of the supernatural events that occurred while Jesus hung on the cross?
2. What does darkness typically symbolize in the Old Testament? Give some examples.
3. What did the darkness at the crucifixion mean?
4. What happened to the veil shielding the Holy of Holies when Christ died? What did that signify?
5. What does the shaking of the earth in the future have to do with the earthquake that occurred at the crucifixion of Christ?
6. Whom did God raise from the dead when Christ died? What did they do after the resurrection of Christ?
7. What caused the centurion and his soldiers to admit, "Truly this Man was the Son of God"?
8. Why did the Sanhedrin want the bodies off the crosses before the end of the day?
9. Why is "knowing Jesus Christ and Him crucified" the heart and soul of the gospel message?
10. Read Hebrews 4:16. Christ endured great suffering so you might have intimate access to God. Have you been enjoying the full access you have to the Father? Are there areas in your life that you need to bring before God's throne of grace?