

# THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

## PART 3: THE GOSPEL COME TO LIFE

### LESSON 12 || THE CRUCIFIXION AND BURIAL

#### SESSION SNAPSHOT

**NARRATIVE PASSAGE:** Matthew 27:32-66; John 19:31-42

**GOSPEL FOCUS:** Hebrews 12:1-2

#### STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

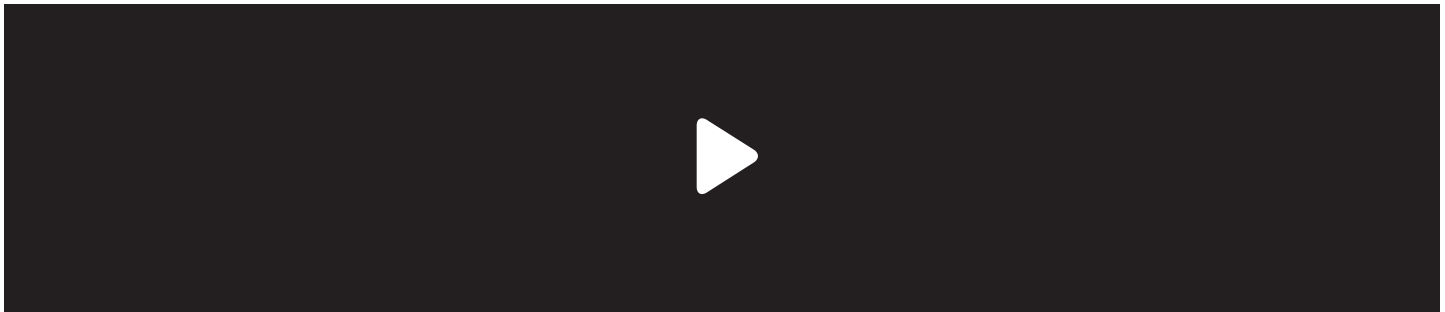
- Understand that Jesus obediently allowed Himself to be put to death to pay for the sins of the world.
- Understand that Jesus conquered death and the cross so that we could have life in Him.
- Consider what it means to endure for their faith in their current contexts.

#### OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, we'll look at two gospel writers and their perspectives on Jesus' crucifixion. We'll see how the events of that critical moment in history had been prophesied about long ago and how Jesus wasn't forced to go to the cross – He did it willingly. Finally, we'll discuss how Jesus' death on the cross impacts us and gives us the confidence to endure suffering on His behalf.

#### TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



#### BIBLE BACKGROUND

*The Bible Background* is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

#### MATTHEW

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the events he details in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50s or 60s AD, though some think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

- *Purpose:* Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to persuade them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. He was also probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel declares that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

## JOHN

- *Author:* The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation and the three New Testament letters that bear his name.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- *Purpose:* John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*" John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

## HEBREWS

- *Author:* The author of Hebrews neither names themselves nor clearly designates their audience. The traditional title "to the Hebrews" reflects the ancient assumption that the original recipients were Jewish Christians. The author's identity has been a matter of significant conjecture throughout church history. Authorship has been attributed to Paul, but there are serious differences in the style and method between this letter and Paul's other letters. Other scholars have offered Barnabas, Clement, Luke, or Apollos as authors, but most concede that this author remains anonymous.
- *Time frame:* Hebrews was almost certainly written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD since the author does not mention or give any hint to this catastrophic happening.
- *Purpose:* Hebrews was written to address Jewish converts to Christianity and challenge them to hold fast to their new found faith. Many of them were resorting back to old traditions, and some were even considering merging with certain Jewish sects. Because of the increased persecution of Jewish converts to Christianity, many were tempted to resort to old rites and rituals to avoid the pain. The writer was convincing these Jewish Christians that Jesus is better than any angel, priest, or old covenant institution.

# LESSON PLAN

*The Lesson Plan contains four elements:*

- **GETTING STARTED**— An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**— A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**— A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**— An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

## GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* Students will discuss being wrongly accused of a crime to understand how it feels to be accused even when innocent.
- *Set-Up:* Before your group time, go to <http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/10-famous-christian-martyrs/> and select a few martyrs listed on the page and print off the information about them.

FIRST, explain to students how many people have given their lives for their faith over the years. Emphasize that these martyrs understood that since Jesus endured death on the cross, they might also face death for their faith in Him.

THEN, ask for some volunteers to each read about one of the martyrs you chose. After the students have read, ask something like:

- **What do you think about when you read stories like this?**
  - *Answers will vary.*
- **What do you think would be going through your mind if you were one of these martyrs?**
  - *Answers will vary.*
- **What do you think it would take for someone to be willing to die for something/someone else?**
  - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, explain to students that in this lesson, you’ll be exploring the obedient sacrifice Jesus made for all humankind—and how they, like the martyrs, are expected to be willing to do the same. Transition to The Story by saying something like:

- **We’re continuing our look at how the Gospel can be found throughout the entire Bible. On this stop, we’ll spend some time examining the obedient sacrifice of Christ while considering the possibility of enduring suffering for your faith in your own life.**

## THE STORY

- *Goal:* To see that Jesus obediently allowed Himself to be put to death to pay for the sins of the world.
- *Set-Up:* Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find that a dry-erase board is helpful for jotting down some notes, but it’s not essential.

FIRST, spend a couple of moments explaining the events leading up to this point in the life of Jesus. If you’d like, use the Connecting The Dots section below to review or fill in the gaps between your last lesson and this one.

## CONNECTING THE DOTS

As you teach *The Thread*, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it to review or connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- Jesus' public ministry had been going on for a while, gaining Him many followers.
- With many followers came some powerful enemies, like the Jewish religious leaders.
- Having been arrested and put on trial, Jesus was now preparing to face punishment that He did not deserve.

NOW, ask students to turn to Matthew 27:32-66. You can use the information from the Bible Background to give some context about the book of Matthew if you'd like. Explain to the students that this is a long passage. Let them know that you'll be reading and talking about it in chunks.

THEN, read or have a student read Matthew 27:32-44. Ask something like:

- **What emotions would you have felt if you were the one ordered to carry Jesus' cross?**
  - *Answers will vary.*
- **What are some of the ways Jesus was mocked in this passage? What stands out to you most? Why?**
  - *Answers will vary.* Some answers might include: being offered a bitter drink, having His garments divided, the sign that read "King of the Jews," being crucified between two robbers, and several verbal assaults.
- **Why were the chief priests, scribes, and elders so eager to mock Jesus?**
  - *Answer:* The religious leaders of the day had always had a problem with Jesus. They believed His message would undermine the authority and systems they had in place that gave them power. They were worried about people following Him rather than them. So, they were thrilled when they got what they wanted by not only getting rid of Jesus but doing it in a shameful way.
- **What do you know about crucifixion as a way of being put to death?**
  - *Answers will vary.* Explain to students that crucifixion was one of the most excruciating ways a person could be put to death.

NEXT, read or have a student read Matthew 27:45-50, and ask:

- **What does the darkness over the earth represent?**
  - *Answer:* The wrath of God for those who contributed to Jesus' death. It could also represent either the darkness that Jesus was to endure or the agony of creation in the Creator's suffering.
- **What is the significance of what Jesus said in verse 46?**
  - *Answer:* He is quoting Psalm 22:1. Jesus felt the wrath of God for every sin every human had and would ever commit. God had to essentially turn His back on His Son as the sins of all humankind were upon Him on that agonizing day of crucifixion. However, Jesus was calling to mind the remainder of the Psalm, which includes victory in verses 21-31.
- **What victory is being won?**
  - *Answer:* First, Jesus knows that He is defeating the power of sin and death. Second, He knows that His Father will not ultimately leave or abandon Him. He knows He will be raised in victory.
- **What is significant about Matthew saying that Jesus "gave up His spirit?"**
  - *Answer:* It shows that Jesus voluntarily gave up His life. He wasn't forced to go to the cross. He knew what He had come to do and did it willingly.

THEN, read or have a student read Matthew 27:51-61. **Ask something like:**

- **What was significant about the curtain of the temple being torn in two?**
  - *Answer:* Now, people could have direct access to the Father. There was no more need for a high priest to enter the holy of holies on anyone's behalf. The better High Priest had offered Himself as a sacrifice and given us access to the Father.
- **The soldiers had an awakening about Jesus. How does Jesus' crucifixion affect you?**
  - *Answers will vary.*
- **What do you think was going through the minds of people like Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary?**
  - *Answer:* They were likely in shock and very sad. It would have been bad enough if this were just a family member or friend that died this way. This was the Messiah that they had been following. They had believed something more was coming, and now all of it seemed like it was for nothing.

NEXT, read or have a student read Matthew 27:62-66. **Ask something like:**

- **What were they so concerned about now that Jesus was dead?**
  - *Answer:* Their main concern had been to squash any uprising or rebellion that could have come from Jesus and His followers. They were worried some of Jesus' followers would try and steal His body and claim that He had been raised.
- **In the back of their minds, do you think they were a little worried that Jesus might actually be able to be raised from the dead?**
  - *Answer:* Probably so. They had seen Him do some amazing things. They knew this wasn't over just yet.

NOW, explain to the students that you will all look at the crucifixion from the perspective of another gospel writer. Read or have a student read John 19:31-42 and **ask something like:**

- **What's the significance of verse 34 telling us that blood and water spilled out of Jesus' body when pierced?**
  - *Answer:* The Old Testament prophesied that the Messiah would be pierced for our transgressions. The soldiers pierced Him with a spear instead of breaking His legs, which was the norm in crucifixions because it expedited death. This fulfilled another prophecy that the Messiah's bones would not be broken. It's also more affirmation that Jesus was fully human and died an excruciating death.
- **Both Matthew and John cited a number of things that happened during Jesus' crucifixion that were fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy. What's important about these references? Why do the Gospel writers choose to write about them?**
  - *Answer:* It shows the continuity between the Old and New Testaments. What was happening to Jesus wasn't happening to just some random person. They were events prophesied about long ago and were now coming true.

**IF STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE THREAD AND EXPLORE FURTHER HOW JESUS' ARREST AND TRIAL CONNECT TO THE BIG-PICTURE NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE**

## THE THREAD

Ask students to turn to Hebrews 12:1-2. While they're finding it, you can use some of the information from the Bible Background to provide some context. Read or have a student read Hebrews 12:1-2 and **ask something like:**

- **Who is this huge cloud of witnesses talked about in verse 1?**
  - *Answer:* Reference Hebrews 11 and mention that there is a long legacy of people that followed God from which students can gain inspiration and encouragement.

- What are some “weights” that slow you down when it comes to being obedient to God?
  - *Answers will vary.*
- What are some distractions that cause your eyes to look for fulfillment in something other than Jesus?
  - *Answers will vary.*

THEN, say something like:

- You know the end of the story. Jesus didn't stay dead. He arose as promised after three days defeating death so you can have life in Him! He suffered. He died. He rose. He did it for your sins so that you could be saved!

IF YOUR STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE WRAPPING UP SECTION.

## WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* To get students to consider what it means to endure for their faith in their current life situations.
- *Set-Up:* None.

FIRST, lead a discussion with the students about what it looks like for them to endure for the faith in their specific context. Ask a series of questions that go something like this:

- What kind of leader willingly chooses to suffer the atrocities Jesus suffered without complaining once?
  - *Answers will vary.* Explain how Jesus willingly chose to suffer unimaginably before giving His life for even those who persecuted Him. He knew that enduring boldly to the end of this sacrificial mission would ultimately give every person who lived and would ever live the opportunity to be delivered from death and hell. That's real and unconditional love. That's being fixed on the things of God and letting nothing get in the way of pursuing His purpose!
- How does Jesus' approach to death on the cross give you confidence in following Him?
  - *Answers will vary.*
- What are some things you, as a student, may have to endure because of your faith? Explain.
  - *Answers will vary.*
- Do you approach those areas with boldness and confidence or with nervousness and fear? Why?
  - *Answers will vary.*
- What are some ways you can become more confident in those areas?
  - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, say something like:

- It is easy to forget that the message of what Jesus did for you through the Cross—His torture, His death, His burial, and His resurrection—is intended for you. It is as personal a message as one can get. He gave His life for you for your salvation! His example shows you that you can endure anything life throws at you joyfully. Jesus paid your sin debt. We respond by giving Him our lives.

If there are no more questions, close your time in prayer.

- If you've purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they'll be working through Week 38 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.

- If you're utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn't work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).