

# The God Who Is

## Leader's Guide

### Jesus, Our Substitute on the Cross

John 19:1-30

#### *Background*

In this passage from John's gospel, we will be looking at the final hours of Jesus' earthly life. He has already said good-bye to His disciples, been betrayed by Judas, captured by the Roman guard, and spent all night being attacked in illegal judicial proceedings. His friends have abandoned him. He has been beaten. He is, no doubt, worn out. But now the day has broken, and the only thing left before Him is the cross. The Apostle John gives us an intimate look into the events surrounding the greatest sacrifice ever made.

#### *Read John 19:1-30*

Contrast Pilate with Jesus in this passage. Who seems more under control? Who seems to be truly in charge? Why do you think this is?

*Although Pilate is technically in charge, he is the one in a tizzy, while Jesus is full of calm. Pilate thinks he has power and authority, but Jesus knows that all authority ultimately belongs to God. This is what allows Jesus to remain so calm and in control—He knows His Father well, and is able to entrust (literally) His life to Him*

The title Pilate puts over Jesus' head on the cross (vv.19-20) were meant to be sarcastic. How does it become ironic instead?

*Pilate sarcastically had the title "King of the Jews" on a sign on Jesus' cross. The irony is that Jesus really WAS the King of the Jews—and the King of the whole world for that matter!*

While on the cross, Jesus is recorded saying seven different things. Three of these sayings are recorded in John's gospel. First, in vv.26-27, Jesus says to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to "the disciple whom He loved" He said, "Here is your mother." What did he mean by this? What does this show you about Jesus? [Bonus question: Do you remember who "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is?]

*What He means is that He wants John (the author of this gospel, and "the disciple whom Jesus loved"—His best friend) to take care of His mother after He is gone. Jesus held His mother in high honor,, and even as He is being cruelly killed, He is not thinking of Himself, but of another.*

Next Jesus says, "I am thirsty." Why does He say this (v.28)?

*To fulfill the prophecy of Scripture*

The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies concerning the life of Jesus, all written hundreds of years before His birth. There are over 30 just about His death! (For two other prophecies about Jesus' death that are fulfilled in John 19, read vv. 23-24 and 31-37.) Why are the prophecies (and their fulfillment) important? What do they say about God?

*They reveal the complete and absolute sovereignty of God—He has complete control over the events of man—nothing can happen without Him willing it to—He knows the future perfectly—nothing can thwart His plans—He keeps all of His promises*

Speaking of the Old Testament, the death of Christ took place during the time of the Jewish, Old Testament Feast of the Passover. What is the significance of this? Lastly, Jesus said, "It is finished." (v.30) What was finished? Why did He say that?

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### Jesus, Our Substitute – page 2

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*Make sure to read Exodus 11-12 as background. The essence is that this festival commemorated the time when, as the Angel of Death struck dead the first-born of all the Egyptians, any Jews (they were living in Egypt) who had sacrificed a lamb and sprinkled its blood on the door would be saved from death. This was meant to be a foreshadowing of Christ: Jesus' shed blood on the cross saves us from death (due to us because of our sins)—He is the ultimate Passover Lamb*

Lastly, Jesus said, "It is finished." (v.30) What was finished? Why did He say that?

*See John 17:4--He had finished doing the will of God. Specifically, paying the penalty for the sins of mankind. The Greek phrase ("tetelestai") might also be translated "paid in full". In that day, when someone paid off a debt, they might receive a receipt that had "tetelestai" stamped across the top to show they were now free of that debt. Jesus has paid our debt (of death) in full.*

What exactly was Jesus accused of and found guilty of? (v.7)

*Claiming to be the Son of God. Again, the irony is that He WAS the Son of God. He was guilty!*

The religious leaders of the day had been following Jesus around the clock for months, trying to catch Him in the act of a sin, and trying to trip Him up with tricky questions. After all that time, this "sin" was the only thing they could find Jesus guilty of. If someone followed you around 24 hours a day for a couple of years, what kind of things would you be found guilty of?" (Think about this quietly for a while—you don't have to answer out loud!)

Why was it important that a sinless man die on the cross, and not just anybody?

*We needed a perfect substitute for our lives. Now, when we appear before God when we die, He will actually see Christ in our place. Because He has already died, we no longer have to. Only perfection can be in God's presence. The only way we can be in God's presence is if we are "hidden" inside Christ. This concept was also foreshadowed in the O.T. sacrificial system (see Leviticus 1-5 & 16).*

How does it affect you emotionally that Jesus died on the cross in your place?

### *Questions for personal reflection*

1. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul writes this: "God made Him who had not sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God...Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that One died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." How does this passage affect you?

2. Take time to thank God for the gift of His Son, who was killed for you.

### Passages For Further Study:

Matthew 27

Mark 15

Luke 23

(For a great study, examine all seven of Jesus' sayings on the cross!)

Colossians 2:13-15

Hebrews 9:15-28;

10:5-14

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