

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus 2
Notes on Lesson Nine: Death and the Empty Tomb

Lesson Nine: Death and the Empty Tomb
Luke 22: 31-62

Central Message

Even at his death, Jesus forgave his enemies. We were all enemies of God, completely separated from him. His death opened the door to heaven for us. The apostle John said, "To all who believe in him, he gave them the power to become children of God." (John 1: 28)

Life Application

When you die, will God welcome you into heaven? Talk to him about it! Even if you still have questions, you can pray to God. Ask him to clean out your sins and come to live¹ in your heart. This is all you need to do to become a Christian.

Community-Building Activity and Introduction²
Death and the Empty Tomb

Preparation: Write the instructions on a board, or print the worksheet or cover page from the supplementary materials. If you use the instruction strips, copy and cut enough strips for each person.

Instructions: Death and the Empty Tomb*

Today's text is a powerful and detailed account of what happened to Jesus. The details are historical evidence that this really happened, and they help us to experience it.

Review: Why is Jesus about to die?

*A tomb is a place for the dead. In Jesus' day, dead people were put into small rooms cut out of the side of hills. Jesus' tomb was covered with a large round stone.

Teaching Notes: You can do this in pairs or as a whole class. You will find good information about Jesus' tomb at <http://www.jesusisreal.org/jesustomb.htm>. You can print it for your students. Note that the review question does not ask why Jesus had to die (the atonement), but rather "why is he about to die." The students can discuss what they remember from the past lessons. They may also bring up God's plan to bring humans back to Himself. If not, this will come up again in the lesson.

¹ See the LINK section.

² The community-building activities and the introductions are often combined in the lesson notes because sometimes the introduction is first, and sometimes the activity is first.

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Lesson Notes

Luke 23:26 - 24:12

Preparation:

Note that the numbers below refer to the numbers in the workbook.

1. Once again, this is a scanning activity. One quick way for them to look for words they do not know is to scan for footnote marks. Ask them to read the footnotes to themselves, or ask them to scan on their own for words, and then read the footnotes together. This is all before they read the text so nothing gets in the way of the force of the text.
- 2/3. Note that these two activities require that one section is read twice. In other words, they are to read one section first with a partner or on their own and write two observation questions. Then (3) they read the entire text together. The text is very powerful, and the extra reading will help them live the words. It might be best for one of the leaders to read the text the second time.
4. Divide up the list among the people in your group. Ask them to make a few notes so they can tell the others how this person acted, thought (if we can tell), or responded to Jesus. They should summarize, not read. The notes below are given so the teacher can follow along as they share. (They were not written to be read aloud.)

Luke 23: 26,34,36,37	the soldiers	They seem rough, but they got someone to help Jesus (who must have been weak from the beatings.) Jesus cried out that he forgave them, and they didn't listen. They threw dice for his clothes. They made fun of him, "Save yourself." (It is not clear whether the wine vinegar was offered as "mercy or mockery"*.) <i>*from Expositor's Bible Commentary, Zondervan Publishers.</i>
Luke 23: 26	the man from Cyrene	His name was Simon. He was forced to help Jesus. All we know about him was that he was in the crowd and close to Jesus. (Why do we know his name? Often when names are known, it is because this person is part of the church after the resurrection. He was on his way INTO the city, so it is almost for sure that the disciples did not know him before this time.
Luke 23:28, 34, 43, 46	Jesus (his words only)	He spoke to the women on the road, words of sadness for what was going to happen to those in Jerusalem. He forgave the soldiers and all the

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		rest. He spoke words of hope to the criminal – today he will be in paradise. He called out to the Father, and died.
Luke 23: 27, 35, 48	women and crowd	Women were walking with him to the cross, weeping for him. (Note: Verses 29-31 are missing in their text.) Women and men stood watching Jesus while the Jewish leaders made fun of them. They went home after Jesus died – in great sorrow.
Luke 23: 32-34, 39	criminal #1	He was put on a cross next to Jesus. He “hurled” insults to Jesus. He knew Jesus was dying because he claimed to be the Christ, but he would not believe unless Jesus saved them right there.
Luke 23: 32-34, 40-43	criminal #2	He was also put to death next to Jesus. He rebuked the first. He knew that he deserved to die (beginning of repentance), but that Jesus did not. He believed in Jesus, and asked Jesus to remember him when he came as King. Somehow this man had a better understanding of the kingdom than the disciples. Jesus forgave him and told him he would be with Jesus in heaven.
Luke 23: 35	the Jewish leaders	They made fun of Jesus and watched him die.
Luke 23: 47	the army officer in charge	He saw what happened – the darkness and the death of Jesus – and said, “Certainly he was a good (not guilty) man.”
Luke 23: 50-55	Joseph of Arimethea	Joseph was a Pharisee on the Council. He believed in Jesus, and did not agree with the other Jewish leaders. He went to Pilate and asked for the body. He took the body down and gave it a respectable burial. He bought a tomb (we assume). He was, Luke tells us, good and honorable.
Luke 23: 38, 52	Pilate	We see from the footnote that Pilate ordered the sign that said “King of the Jews.” We know from before that he did not think Jesus was guilty, and wanted to get out of the crucifixion. He let Joseph bury Jesus, but we learn from the other gospels that he ordered Roman guards. We don't learn a lot about what he actually thought.
Luke 23: 49—24: 8-11	the women disciples	They stayed with the men disciples. They watched the death from a distance. They, not the men, went with Joseph to care for the body, and they, without any of the men, went back after the Sabbath to care for the body again. They were

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		brave, and very sad. They were afraid of the angels, but they believed them (at least they remembered that Jesus had, indeed, said that he would rise), but the men did not believe the women.
Luke 24: 4-7	two men in bright clothing	The angels said that Jesus was among the "living." They reminded the women what Jesus said – that he would rise to life three days after he died.
Luke 23:49, 24:10-12	his disciples and friends	They stood at a distance to watch. They did not believe the women. However, Peter got up and RAN to the tomb. He saw that it was empty. He went back, amazed.

5. Since the text does not say that Jesus was forgiving one group of people, we can add everyone who was against him. Ask the group who needed forgiveness at this point? Most of the people in the chart above would be included.
6. Review the meaning of "irony." They are making fun of Jesus, saying that if he were really the Messiah, he would save himself. Ask the group what, instead, is the truth. Jesus, by dying, offered salvation to everyone. There was another irony here. You will find it in footnote #9 in the text.
7. What did he do? Nothing that we can see. He was dying because he was a criminal. All he "did" was believe. See the note at the end of the lesson in "Consider This."
8. Listen to their opinions about this. Luke lifts these women up for their courage and faith. Note that Mary Magdalene and Joanna have been with the disciples for a long time. See Luke 8. (There are two new lessons coming on the women disciples.) As mentioned above, these women were probably also a part of the church after the resurrection.
9. He got up and RAN. Ask the group when he and Jesus last saw each other. (Jesus looked at him as the crow cocked the third time.) Let them talk about how Peter felt when he denied Jesus and how he might feel now. What do you think Peter will say if he gets a chance to see Jesus again?

LINK Read this section and decide whether you have time to read it in class. If not, you can summarize it.

LIVE Note that the first question asks them to imagine that the criminal is now with Jesus, in other words, in heaven. You can add to the question, "What do you want to

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say *to Jesus?*” If there is not time for the second question, read it and ask them to think about it. (They might hesitate to answer the second part, but anyone can answer the first part about who should get into heaven.)

Consider This: The summary below has been added. Read this to the class, and then pray for the class if you feel it is appropriate.

Even at his death, Jesus forgave his enemies. We were all enemies of God, completely separated from him. His death opened the door to heaven for us. The apostle John said, “To all who believe in him, he gave them the power to become children of God.” (John 1: 28)

When you die, will God welcome you into heaven? Talk to him about it! Even if you still have questions, you can pray to God. Ask him to clean out your sins and come to live³ in your heart. This is all you need to do to become a Christian.

FINAL WORD: The Final Word is not an easy passage to read, so it will help them greatly if you read it to them. (Decide first if their English level is high enough to understand it.) Read it and think about it first – Jesus came to destroy the devil with his power of death and to free those who have been held in slavery by their fear of death. There is no greater freedom! (Before you read, point out these two phrases:
shared in their humanity [he became a man]

were held in slavery [They were held – like a slave – they were not free]
(Demonstrate being tied up by crossing your arms.)

Also note the footnote. Read the text to them. Emphasize the important words and the flow of the sentence so they can understand it.

“[Jesus]... shared in their humanity so that by his death
he might destroy him who holds the power of death
–that is, the devil–
and free those who all their lives were held in slavery
by their fear of death.”⁴

Hebrews 2: 14-15 NIV

³ See the LINK section.

⁴ ... those who are always afraid of dying.

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Death and the Empty Tomb

In the last lesson, the Roman governor gave the order for Jesus' death.

In this lesson, the sad and frightened disciples watched Jesus' death from a distance. On the third day, the women helped to care for the body. They were the first to discover that the tomb... was empty!

Community Time



Death and the Empty Tomb*

- Today's text is a powerful and detailed account of what happened to Jesus. The details are historical evidence that this really happened, and they help us to experience it.
- Review: Why is Jesus about to die?
- *A tomb is a place for dead bodies. In Jesus' day, dead people were put into small rooms cut out of the side of hills. Jesus' tomb was covered with a large round stone. The photo below is the "Garden Tomb." It is identified as Jesus' tomb. However, as you will see in the lesson, his tomb is empty.



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