

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

EPISODE 8: MESSIAH IS SACRIFICED

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Main Points

Here are the big ideas you want people to understand:

- God sent his chosen leader, Jesus the Messiah, down to earth
- Although Jesus was the king sent by God, mankind ultimately rejected and killed him
- The tragedy of the cross actually fulfilled God's plan! Jesus was being lifted up and sacrificed as the Lamb of God.
- The curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This shows that the way to God has now been opened for us by Jesus.

EXPLORING THE STORY

◀ Look Back

Before diving into this week's session, give the group a chance to share and catch up to see where each person is at. Start with the following:

1. One-up (or One-down)

Invite each person to share one thing that has happened over the past week that they are grateful for (or, they can share one thing that has been weighing on them)

2. Prayer

Have a time of prayer and thanksgiving based on what was shared

3. Review

Quickly summarize where we've been before moving into this week's story:

“ **Last time...** Jesus had a conversation with one of the religious leaders of his day, a man named Nicodemus. Jesus explained that before we can enter God's kingdom we must be spiritually reborn. He also explained that every person on earth has been bitten and infected by the poison of sin. He pointed Nicodemus back to an old story about Moses and the bronze snake. Jesus predicted that he too would be lifted up and that everyone who looks to him for healing will be cured.

▲ Look Up

Now that you've reviewed where we've been, shift to this week's episode.

4. Setting the Stage

“ Jesus continued his public work of teaching God's message for three years. As his influence with the common people grew, he came to be viewed as a major threat by those in power. Finally, while visiting the city of Jerusalem for the festival of Passover, he was arrested. The Jewish leaders wanted him out of the way. After arresting him, they turned him over to the Roman governor, a man named Pilate.

As we read the story, be thinking about these things:

- How do you see people acting towards Jesus?
- How do you see Jesus conducting himself?

5. Read **Mark 15** and then discuss:

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- Retell the story in your own words. What happened that day?
 - What was Jesus accused of being? (Mark 15.2, 32)
 - Think of all the different people that were described in our reading today. How did different ones treat Jesus?
 - In Mark 15.37-38, the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. What is the meaning?

Read **Psalm 22** and then discuss:

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- How did Jesus' death on the cross fulfill what was written in Psalm 22? How many parallels do you find?
 - What does this teach us about Jesus' death, from God's point of view?

► Look Ahead

Help people process the implications of this week's reading and how they should apply its truths to the way they think and live.

6. Implications and Applications

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- Read 1 Peter 2.21-25. Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples. Many years after Jesus was killed on the cross, Peter wrote to explain why it happened. According to Peter, why did Jesus die on the cross?
 - Jesus was rejected and crucified as king and Messiah. How do you respond to his claims to be both?

7. Closing Prayer