

# Lesson 8: One Last Night, One Dark Day

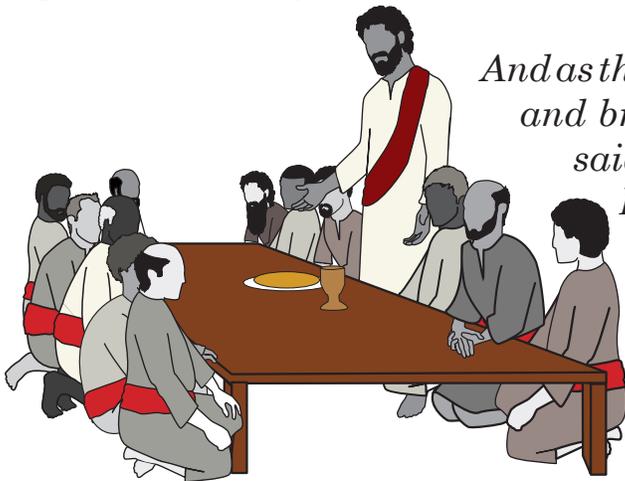
## *Introduction: Plans*

Many plans had been made that would be accomplished soon. Judas had plans to betray Jesus to the religious leaders. They had plans to condemn Jesus to death. The devil had a plan to destroy the Son of God. Even the greatest plan of all, God's plan to redeem man from sin, was soon to be accomplished. All that was left for God's plan to be fulfilled was one last night and one dark day.<sup>1</sup>



## *The Communion*

On the night Jesus was betrayed, He brought His disciples into an upper room. There they had a meal together. After the meal, Jesus did something very special: He instituted the Communion. (It is also called *the Lord's Supper*.) This is a very special ceremony that Christians still keep to this day.



*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."<sup>2</sup>*

The bread and the cup of fruit of the vine (grape juice) did not magically turn into Jesus' *body* and *blood of the new covenant*. (Nor does it today.) They are symbolic examples. Christians use these symbols every Sunday to honor Jesus' sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus told Judas that He knew of his betrayal. Even so, Judas did not repent. Instead, Judas left to find the religious leaders. Meanwhile, Jesus was trying to tell His followers that He would die soon. He knew God's plan involved His sacrifice on the cross. He also said that all the disciples would forsake Him and run away.

<sup>1</sup> Scriptures of Jesus last night and final day are found in Matthew 26-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, and John 18-19

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 26:26-29 (See also Mark 14:22-26 & Luke 22:14-23)

<sup>3</sup> Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; See *Christian Basics: All About the Communion*

### Discussion Questions:

- *In your own words, what is the communion and why does it matter?*

## *A Garden Prayer*

Jesus led His disciples to a mountainside olive grove to pray. All of His disciples, even Judas, knew of this location. With His disciples nearby, Jesus knelt in prayer. Jesus was in great sorrow and deeply distressed. His prayer was a window into His heart:

*“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”<sup>4</sup>*

Jesus’ prayer for the cup to pass was a reference to God’s wrath. Since the time when sin first came into the world, the wrath and judgment of God had been against sinful man. Jesus was overwhelmed with sorrow because He knew that the death of an innocent person was necessary in order to atone for the sins of the guilty. Since Jesus lived a perfect life without sin, He was the only one who could die in order to save man from sin.

## *Jesus Is Arrested*

As Jesus was praying, the sound of soldiers’ feet filled the garden. Jesus’ disciples were surprised to see a large mob around them. In the middle of this group of troublemakers was Judas Iscariot. He told the mob as they arrived to look for the one that he kissed. This would be a sign for them to see who to arrest.

Judas stepped forward. He kissed Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi.” Jesus replied, “Friend, do what you came for.” With the sign witnessed by the soldiers, they stepped forward to arrest Jesus. At this point, all of Jesus’ disciples deserted Him and ran away. It was just as He had said.



## *A Dishonest Trial*

Jesus was brought before the Jewish religious council. They tried many ways to prove that Jesus was guilty of something that deserved death. No one could find anything. Eventually, after many false witnesses, the high priest asked for Jesus to answer if He was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered:

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<sup>4</sup>Matthew 26:39

### Discussion Questions:

- *Why do you think Jesus was so concerned about God's wrath?*
- *How do you think Jesus felt when Judas betrayed Him?*

*“It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”<sup>5</sup>*

The high priest accused Jesus of blasphemy, which is insulting God. They thought Jesus insulted God by saying He and the Father are equals. What they refused to see was that Jesus was (and is) a part of the Godhead.<sup>6</sup> He had come from heaven and from God the Father! The council agreed that Jesus was worthy of death. They blindfolded Him, spat in His face, and struck Him with the palms of their hands. They mocked Him and asked for Him to prophesy who had hit Him.

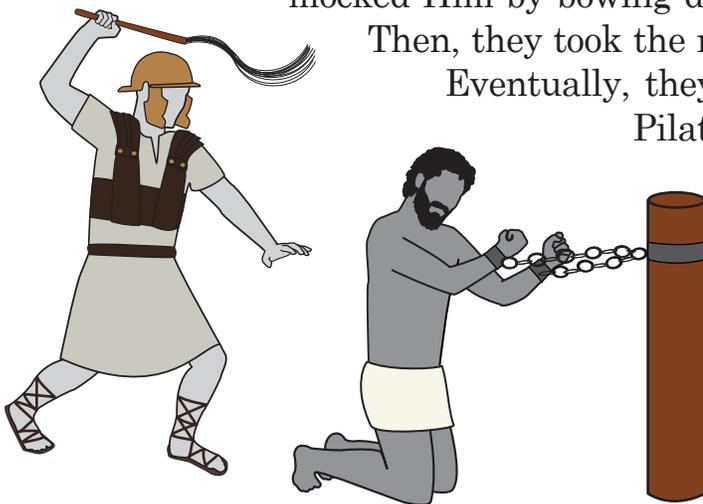
## *An Angry Mob and the Roman Governor*

The Jewish leaders took Jesus to the Roman Governor’s courtyard. They needed permission from Pontius Pilate (the governor) to execute Jesus. When Judas saw Jesus was condemned, his betrayal made him feel guilty. He ran to the temple and begged that they take back the money. He said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”<sup>7</sup> When they refused to accept it, he threw the money in the temple. Then Judas left and hanged himself. Perhaps he felt that the consequences of his sins were too much to bear.

Pilate the Governor took Jesus inside, and they had a private conversation. From this, Pilate began to see that Jesus was innocent and that the religious leaders were envious of Him. He tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish mob was angry and called for His death. Pilate had Jesus scourged with a whip. The whip most likely had metal, bone, or glass in its tips so that the whip would cut into the flesh. After His body was ripped open by the scourging, the Roman soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus’ head. They put a purple robe on His bloody back and put a reed in his hand. Then, they mocked Him by bowing down and saying, “Hail, King of the Jews.”

Then, they took the reed out of His hands and hit Him with it.

Eventually, they led the bloody and broken Man back to Pilate.



Pilate took Jesus to the front of the large Jewish mob. He called out, “Behold the Man.” He called for Jesus to be released. Pilate believed Jesus was innocent. (Perhaps he had hoped that scourging Jesus would

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 26:64

<sup>6</sup> Philippians 2:6-10, Colossians 2:9; See *Christian Basics: The Godhead (Parts 1-3)*

<sup>7</sup> See *Christian Basics: “I’m Sorry, God.” Remorse and Repentance*

### Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Pilate had Jesus whipped and beaten?
- If Pilate believed Jesus was innocent, why did he not simply release Him?

make the people feel pity.) The religious leaders were ready. When Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, they had told the mob what to say. “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Pilate was shocked. “Why?” he shouted, “What crime has He committed?” The mob only shouted louder, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!”

## *A Long Walk*

Only a week earlier, the city had welcomed Jesus. They shouted with joy that He had come. Now they called for His death. They called for His blood to be on them and their children. Jesus was probably overcome with grief to see these people calling for His death when so little time had passed since they celebrated His life.

Pilate gave in to the religious leaders’ request. He sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion. The Roman soldiers forced Jesus to carry a large wooden cross through the streets of Jerusalem. As Jesus slowly walked, the people of the city came out to see the horror. Blood fell to the streets as He struggled through. They slowly walked towards a hill called Golgotha. This word means *the place of the skull*. Even the hill looked like death.



### *In Review: One Last Night, One Dark Day*

On the last night of Jesus’ ministry, He celebrated a special feast with His disciples and instituted The Lord’s Supper to commemorate His death. When He prayed in a mountain garden, He was betrayed by His disciple Judas and was arrested. In a false trial they condemned Jesus to death. He was beaten, spit on, mocked, and flogged. With the sentence of death from the governor, Jesus was led away to die. May the raw emotion of this part of the gospel narrative shed a new sense of appreciation on God’s love for mankind:

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16*