

He Died for Us



SABBATH—OCTOBER 29

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 13:8; Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:19, 20; Titus 1:2; Matthew 16:21–23; John 19:1–30; John 3:14–18; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 1:18–24.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Moses lifted up a snake on a piece of wood in the desert. So the Son of Man must be lifted up. Then everyone who believes in him will not die, but will live for ever’ ” (John 3:14, 15, WE).



Jesus' resurrection or waking up from the dead is important to our faith.

SOONER OR LATER, we all die. The Bible teaches that evil people and saved people both end up in the same place. So, our hope in the resurrection is very important. As we know, the resurrection is the time when God will wake up His people from the dead at the Second Coming. If we do not hope in the resurrection, then we have no hope at all. As Paul said, if we don't have hope that dead people will wake up, then the Christians who “died believing in Christ are also lost” (1 Corinthians 15:18, NIV). This verse shows us that there are no spirits of dead people in heaven.

For sure, Jesus' resurrection or waking up from the dead is important to our faith. His resurrection gives us proof that we will wake up from the dead, too. Before Jesus woke up from the dead, He had to die first, of course. This experience was terrible for Jesus. He suffered deeply in the Garden of Gethsemane before His death. That's why He prayed, “ ‘Now My soul is troubled. Should I say, “Father, save Me from this time of trouble and pain”? No, this is why I came to this time’ ” (John 12:27, NIV).

This week we will look at Jesus' death on the cross. How does His death promise us everlasting life?

BEFORE THE EARTH WAS MADE (Revelation 13:8)

Read Revelation 13:8; Acts 2:23; and 1 Peter 1:19, 20. Why does John say that Jesus is the Lamb “whose death was planned before the world [the earth and everything in it] was created [made]” (Revelation 13:8, NIRV)?

“Many people who live on the earth will worship the beast. They [the ones who worship the beast] are the ones whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life. The Lamb is the one whose death was planned before the world was created [made]” (Revelation 13:8, NIRV). What does this verse mean? We must remember that Revelation is a book that uses word pictures or symbols. Then we can understand what this verse means. We know that Jesus didn’t die on the cross until thousands of years after He made the earth. And this verse is saying that God made a plan to save humans **before** He made the earth. The most important part of that plan was Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus is God’s Lamb.

How long ago did God make the plan to save sinners? How does Titus 1:2 help us answer the question?

“God didn’t make the plan to save humans at the last minute after Adam sinned. . . . God’s plan to save sinners showed the important rules that have always been a part of His government from the beginning of time.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 22, adapted.

God first showed His saving plan to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15, 21). We see God’s saving plan in every animal that was killed and offered to God. We see an example of God’s saving plan in the test of faith that God gave Abraham. At the end of Abraham’s test, God sent a male sheep to be killed as a substitute for Isaac (Genesis 22:11–13). This substitute showed the future death of Jesus for our sins on the cross.

Jesus is our Substitute. He paid for our sins with His life. Every animal offering to God was a symbol or word picture of Jesus’ death as the “Lamb of God. He takes away the sins of the world!” (John 1:29, ERV).

Animal offerings are bloody and ugly, yes. But why is the blood and the ugly death so important? That is, what does the innocent animal’s death teach us about Jesus’ death for us and the terrible price He paid to save us from sin?



We must remember that Revelation is a book that uses word pictures or symbols.

BORN TO DIE (Matthew 16:21–23)

How did Jesus' followers feel when they heard Him announce that He was going to suffer and die? What do their feelings teach us about how we can misunderstand the Bible?

Matthew 16:21–23 _____

Matthew 17:22, 23; Mark 9:30–32; Luke 9:44, 45 _____

Luke 18:31–34 _____



In the last year of Jesus' work on earth, He explained to His followers that He was going to die.

Jesus was born to die. He lived to die. Jesus knew that God sent Him to die on the cross. So, Jesus didn't let anyone, or anything, stop Him from doing His work. "Everything that happened to Jesus before His death was the same as an introduction written in the front of a book. This introduction helps the reader to get ready for the rest of the book. In the same way, Jesus' whole life was all about getting Him ready for the cross."—Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 382, adapted.

In the last year of Jesus' work on earth, He explained to His followers that He was going to die. But His followers weren't willing to accept His words. The followers believed false ideas about the Savior. Their false ideas caused them pain and suffering.

While Jesus was in Caesarea Philippi, He told His followers that "he must go to Jerusalem. There he must suffer many things. . . . He must be killed and on the third day rise to life again" (Matthew 16:21, NIV). Later, Jesus walked in Galilee (Mark 9:30–32). During that trip and on His final trip to Jerusalem (Luke 18:31–34), Jesus told His followers again about His death. His followers didn't want to hear this. So, they didn't pay attention. It's easy for us to not pay attention, too, right?

God's chosen people had false ideas about the Savior's first coming. What are some of the false ideas that Christians today believe about the Second Coming?

“ ‘IT IS FINISHED’ ” (John 19:30, ERV)

Read in John 19:1–30 about Jesus’ death. In verse 30, Jesus says, “ ‘It is finished’ ” (John 19:30, ERV). Why are these words so important? What do they mean?

John 19 tells us about the final hours of Jesus before He died on the cross. Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Then Jesus was dragged to court. He did not get a fair trial. Then Jesus went to the mountain of Calvary to die. Evil angels tried to make Jesus disobey God all night and all day. While Jesus hung on the cross, the religious leaders made fun of Him. “They said, ‘He saved others, but he can’t save himself! People say he is the king of Israel. If he is the king, he should come down now from the cross. Then we will believe in him’ ” (Matthew 27:42, ERV).

Did Jesus have the strength to come off the cross and save Himself? Yes. But Jesus did not try to save Himself. He cared more about saving humans. He loved humans so very much, including the men who made fun of Him while He died. “Jesus died to save the same men who laughed at Him while He hung on the cross. He died to save them. So, Jesus refused to come down from the cross and save Himself. The nails did not hold Jesus to the cross. Love for sinners held Jesus there.”—Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (London: Elliot Stock, 1910), page 397, adapted.

Jesus won the war against Satan and his kingdom. How? By His suffering. Satan caused the problems for Jesus that led Jesus to the cross. Satan himself led Judas to turn against Jesus (John 6:70; John 13:2, 27). “Satan causes Jesus’ death. At the same time, when Jesus dies, He wins the war against Satan.”—George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised edition (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 1994), page 192, adapted.

When Jesus cried, “ ‘It is finished’ ” (John 19:30, ERV), two things happened. First, His suffering on the cross was over. Second, He won the worldwide war against Satan and his evil forces. “All heaven celebrated the Savior’s win. Satan lost the war and his kingdom.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 758, adapted.

Sin must be very bad if Jesus needed to die to save us. What does this Bible truth teach us about how our good behavior is useless to save us?



“Jesus refused to come down from the cross and save Himself.”

HE DIED FOR US (John 3:14–18)

Read John 3:14–18 and Romans 6:23. What do these verses teach us that Jesus’ death did for us?

When Jesus arrived at the Jordan River to be baptized, John the Baptist announced: “ ‘Look, the Lamb of God. He takes away [removes] the sins of the world [humans]!’ ” (John 1:29, ERV). John’s announcement showed that Jesus was the living Lamb. During Old Testament times, all the animals that were killed for offerings showed Jesus’ future death. But animal blood cannot remove sin (Hebrews 10:4). The forgiveness that God promised by the animal offerings depended on Jesus’ death. “If we tell Him our sins, He is faithful [can be trusted] and we can depend on Him to forgive us of our sins. He will make our lives clean from all sin” (1 John 1:9, NLV).

Read John 3:16, 17. What wonderful hope do these verses give us?



During Old Testament times, all the animals that were killed for offerings showed Jesus’ future death.

Think about everything John 3:16, 17 promises us. Jesus offered Himself for each of us. Why did the One who made everything (John 1:1–3) die for us? He died so that we do not need to be punished for our sins. This Bible truth is Good News. Jesus wants us to share it with everyone.

Jesus announced: “ ‘Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son’ ” (John 3:16, ERV) to die for us. We should never forget that no one forced Jesus to die for us. He volunteered to save us (Hebrews 9:14). Martin Luther wrote, “The cross was the same as an altar. Jesus offered Himself on this altar. There, Jesus was burned up by His love, which was the same as a fire. This fire burned in Jesus’ heart. Jesus gave His body and His blood as an offering to the Father. Jesus went to God to get help for us. With hot tears, Jesus cried to God to save us (Hebrews 5:7).”—*Luther’s Works*, volume 13 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), page 319, adapted. Jesus died only one time to save us all (Hebrews 10:10, 12). Jesus’ offering is all-powerful and never loses its strength.

There’s more: “What if only one person accepted the Good News? Would Jesus have died for him or her? Yes. Jesus would choose to suffer and die for that one soul.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, page 135, adapted.

How can you accept the promise in John 3:16?

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS (1 Corinthians 1:18–24)

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18–24. What is Paul saying in these verses about the cross? Why is that message so important for our time?

In the Bible, we see that the Cross of Jesus is the most important part of God’s plan to save sinners. “We will never fully understand how much love God showed humans at the cross of Calvary. At the cross, Jesus and His love met Satan and his selfish ways face-to-face.” —Stephen N. Haskell, *The Cross and Its Shadow* (South Lancaster, MA: Bible Training School, 1914), page v, adapted.

While Jesus offered Himself for humans, Satan made Him suffer terrible pain. Jesus didn’t die only the natural death that every person must die. Jesus died the second death. Everyone who accepts Jesus won’t need to die this death.

The Cross teaches us several important Bible truths: (1) The Cross shows us God’s punishment against sin (Romans 3:21–26). (2) The Cross shows us God’s love for sinners (Romans 5:8). (3) The Cross gives us the strength to escape the “chains” of sin (Romans 6:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 1:17–24). (4) The Cross is our only hope of everlasting life (Philippians 3:9–11; John 3:14–16; 1 John 5:11, 12). And (5) the Cross is the only thing that will stop men and angels from starting another war against God’s government (Revelation 7:13–17; Revelation 22:3).

Without God’s help, the wisest humans can’t learn important Bible truths about the Cross. No wonder these “wise” men think that the teachings about the Cross are a foolish story. Should we be surprised, then, that so many “wise” people don’t believe that there is a God who made the earth and sky?

The English word for “moron” or “fool” comes from the Greek word for “foolish.” The preaching about the Cross is “foolish” to the “wise men” on this earth. They can’t know Jesus or His saving love that He offers us on the cross.

The teachings of wise men have much to offer us. But why must we never let their wisdom come between us and Jesus, who uses the “foolish things we preach to save those [people] who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21, NIV)?



The Cross shows us God’s love for sinners.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Gethsemane,” pages 685–697; “Calvary,” pages 741–757, in *The Desire of Ages*; “Repentance,” page 27, in *Steps to Christ*.

“I saw that everyone in heaven wants us to be saved. Shouldn’t this thought make us care about being saved, too? Shouldn’t this thought keep us from being careless? Our being saved or lost is very important. Don’t we care about how much God offered to save us? Some people don’t care. They have not been thankful for God’s mercy. God frowns at them. God’s Spirit won’t stay with us if we don’t want Him. The Spirit will go away if we make Him sad because we don’t thank God for everything. God has done so much to save humans. If they show that they don’t want Jesus’ mercy, they will die in the end. When they die, they will feel all the pain Jesus felt on the cross. Then the people who are not saved will understand everything they lost: everlasting life and the treasures of heaven. Jesus’ wonderful offering for our sins shows us how much humans are worth. When a precious soul is lost, he or she is lost forever.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, page 124, adapted.



“God’s Spirit won’t stay with us if we don’t want Him.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Paul writes, “It is not possible for the blood of bulls [male cows] and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4, ERV). If these offerings didn’t save anyone who made them, why did people need to make the offerings?
- ② If Jesus died for the sins of everyone, why won’t everyone be saved? Why is our personal choice so important in God’s decision? Read 2 Corinthians 5:18–21 for the answer.
- ③ What are some of the foolish ideas that thinkers on this earth teach? What about the idea that life started by accident? Or that this earth and all the stars and planets came from nothing without God? What other examples of foolish ideas can you think of?

“DON’T FIGHT BACK!”

In this story, we will tell you about Omar. But Omar is not his real name. We named him Omar to protect him. Omar was a university student in the Middle East. Omar needed a job. But he refused to work on Sabbath. He told the manager at a company when he went to get a job that Saturdays were his holy day. The manager said, “We don’t need you.” That was correct. There were many people out of work in his country and very few jobs. So, the manager easily could find someone else willing to work on the Sabbath.

Omar was sad when he left the company’s office. Omar was a new Christian. He gave his life to Jesus a few days ago. Omar had studied the Bible with Christians for six years. Then he decided to accept Jesus as his Savior. After Omar did not get the job, he bought a food cart. Omar planned to make money by selling sesame-seed bread. Omar’s Sabbath-keeping friends were touched by his loyal stand for Jesus. They prayed for him.

A few days later, Omar announced that the company called him back and offered him the job with Saturdays off. Omar was so excited that he decided to find at least one new person to talk to about Jesus everyday.

Later that week, Omar sat at a local café. He and an older man started to talk about religion. Omar told the man about the peace he found when he gave his life to Jesus.

When Omar left the café, a man from a nearby table followed him. The man heard Omar’s conversation with the older gentleman. The man yelled at Omar. “I can’t believe that you can say these crazy things! Aren’t you ashamed? You grew up in our country and you know better!” The man started to beat Omar with his fists. Later that day, a Sabbath-keeping friend called Omar on a FaceTime phone call. The friend was surprised to see Omar’s puffy black eye. Omar smiled at his friend with joy.

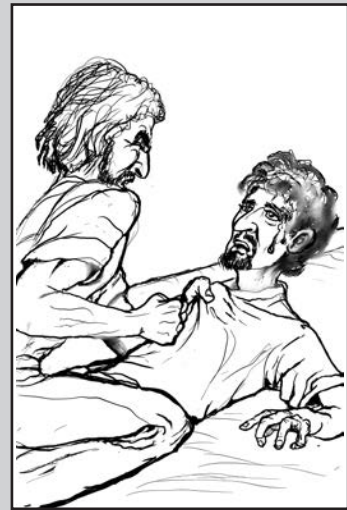
“You could have called the police,” Omar’s friend said.

“Yes,” Omar said. “But I remembered that Jesus tells us ‘Do not fight back!’ ”

Jesus told His followers, “ ‘You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye must be put out for an eye. A tooth must be knocked out for a tooth’ (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21). But here is what I tell you. Do not fight against an evil person. Suppose someone slaps you on your right cheek. Turn your other cheek to them also’ ” (Matthew 5:38, 39, NIV).

Read the “I Will Go” Plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Growth Task Number 2 for the church is: “The church will help the Adventist Church grow strong in new ways in large cities. We will share Jesus with people who do not know Him in North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.”

INSIDE *Story* by RICK McEDWARD



The man started to beat Omar with his fists.

