

A Man of Sorrows



A 6 SESSION **BIBLE STUDY**
FOR LENT

leader's guide

INTRODUCTION

*He was despised and rejected
by men; a man of sorrows,
and acquainted with grief.*

ISAIAH 53:3

The movie *The Passion of the Christ*, based on the contemplative writings of an eighteenth-century German nun, starkly portrayed the physical agony suffered by Jesus during his trial and crucifixion. The prophet Isaiah had foretold that God's suffering Servant, the Messiah, would be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). The Lord Jesus certainly enjoyed the company of friends and displayed his constant compassion and love for all people, yet throughout his public ministry—and finally, in his trial and crucifixion—he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," as the prophet foretold. What grief, what sorrow and suffering, did our Savior endure for the sake of our salvation?

Leader's Guide For Session 1

BEFORE CLASS:

Read through this session yourself. Examine the Bible readings listed and become acquainted with them.

READ: Have a member of the group read the Introduction on page 4 aloud.

READ: Have someone read the Opening Prayer or read the prayer in unison.

DISCUSS: Discuss experiences of rejection.

SESSION 1



REJECTION

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. JOHN 1:11

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, during this season of Lent, with repentant hearts we will follow our Lord's path to the cross. Bless our study of your Word as we seek to learn more about the wondrous gift of our salvation and all that our Savior suffered for us. By the power of your Spirit, help us to grow in grace and keep us faithful to our Lord unto death. Hear our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

DISCUSSION

Have you ever been rejected, or felt rejected, in some way, even in a small way? If you wish, share your thoughts and feelings concerning the experience.

READ: Read aloud or have someone read aloud the Introduction.

Despised and Rejected

1. The Messiah will have no attractive form, beauty or apparent majesty that would cause people to be attracted to him. Answers will vary. The Messiah will be despised and rejected, dishonored, a person from whom people would hide their faces. • People believed in Jesus because of the words he spoke and because of the works that he did.
2. The religious leaders, the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees hoped to destroy Jesus. They would come to him and pretend to ask sincere questions, yet in reality hoping to trap him into saying something against the Law of Moses or against Roman law, something they could use to condemn him (see, for example, Luke 20:19-20). Jesus' own disciple Judas betrayed him.
3. Jesus' enemies sought to destroy him, but they had no reasons, other than their own hatred, to do so. He was innocent. In Gethsemane he cried out to his Father for his help. • Jesus' own brothers did not believe in him, at least not at first (as in Psalm 69:8). • Jesus was zealous for God's house, but

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps in grade school you were rejected; you were not chosen for the team. Maybe your science project did not win that hoped-for blue ribbon. Rejection, at any age, does not feel good. It can be a mildly disappointing experience or a crushing, life-changing event. Our Lord Jesus knew what it was to be rejected. He was rejected by the people he came to save, yet still he laid down his life for them—and for us. Because he was rejected, we are accepted, adopted by faith as the sons and daughters of God. We are chosen.

DESPISED AND REJECTED

1. **Read Isaiah 53:1-4.** The Jews, in obedience to God's command forbidding the worship of graven images, did not paint or carve portraits. In spite of the efforts of artists through the centuries, we do not really know what Jesus looked like. What does the prophet Isaiah tell us about the Messiah's physical appearance? How does this description differ from the portraits of Jesus we often see? There is no suggestion here of attractive, physical beauty. How will the Messiah be received—or will he be received at all? **Read John 4:41-42 and John 14:10-11.** What did attract people to Jesus?
2. **Read Psalm 41.** The psalmist David had enemies and he cried out to God to be defended from them. Yet the psalmist also speaks of the promised Messiah, foretelling events in the life of Jesus. What enemies did Jesus have who sought his death and hoped to make his name perish? In what circumstances did Jesus' enemies utter "empty words" to him, while all along their hearts were gathering iniquity? How did the Messiah's close friend "lift his heel" (an insulting gesture in the Middle East; you may remember news images of people hitting posters and statues of a fallen dictator with their shoes and sandals), that is, betray and insult him? Note that the psalm ends on a note of praise. The enemies will not shout in triumph over God's Messiah!
3. **Read Psalm 69:1-8.** In what ways do the first five verses of this psalm foretell Jesus' suffering? **Read John 7:1-5.** Which words of this psalm speak of the reaction of Jesus' own brothers? **Read Psalm 69:9-21.** Which verses here speak to the suffering and rejection endured by Jesus?

he was rejected and the subject of hate and gossip. The darkness of sin and evil swept over him like a flood. No one pitied him. On the cross he was given sour wine to drink.

He Came to His Own

1. People glorified Jesus when he taught in the synagogues. In the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus read a description of the Messiah's work from the prophet Isaiah. Then Jesus told them that the prophecy was fulfilled in their hearing that day. He was the one of whom the prophet spoke. At first all the people spoke well of Jesus and of the way he spoke. Jesus spoke to them of unbelief and of the lack of honor for him in his hometown. He spoke of Israel's unbelief in the days of Elijah and Elisha, when people of Sidon and Syria believed and the Israelites did not. Jesus exposed the truth of their own unbelief to them. The people of Nazareth sought to kill him by throwing him off of a cliff, but he escaped and went away.
2. The demons recognized Jesus' true identity as the Son of God. Answers will vary, but as spiritual beings they would recognize the God who created them. The people of the city begged Jesus to leave their region. Answers will vary, but the people may have feared the kind of power Jesus displayed.
3. Jesus' opponents ask him if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath. They hope to accuse him of disregarding the Law of Moses. Jesus points out that any of them would rescue a sheep from a pit on the Sabbath. A man in need of healing

HE CAME TO HIS OWN

1. **Read John 1:9-11 and Luke 4:14-30.** The world was made through Jesus, yet when he came, the world did not know or recognize him. His own people, the people of Israel who for centuries had awaited the Messiah, did not receive him. How was Jesus generally received in the synagogues of Galilee? When Jesus went to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, he read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-2). What did he announce to the people? What was the initial reaction of the people of Nazareth? What did Jesus tell them that angered them? Why would this anger them? What did they try to do to him?
2. **Read Mark 5:1-20.** In this account, who recognizes Jesus' true identity? Why are they able to do so? When the people of the nearby city hear and see what Jesus did for the demon-possessed man, what is their response? Why might they have reacted to Jesus in this way?
3. **Read Matthew 12:9-14.** What do Jesus' opponents ask him, in order to find a way to accuse him of wrongdoing? How does Jesus' response reveal their hypocrisy? How do the Pharisees respond to the miracle?
4. **Read John 6:57-69.** Jesus calls his flesh "true food" and his blood "true drink." Those who feed on him will live forever. How do some of the people—even some of his disciples or followers (but not the Twelve)—respond after Jesus says these things? **Read John 8:48-59.** What do the unbelieving Jews say about Jesus? What is their response when Jesus offers eternal life to all who keep his word? Jesus not only claims to have seen Abraham, he identifies himself as "I Am," the God of Abraham. The people to whom Jesus is speaking understand his claim—and reject it. How do they respond? **Read John 10:27-33.** What does Jesus say about his relationship to the Father? What is the Jews' response to his claim?

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

1. "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

is of far more value than a sheep. It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. The Pharisees conspire about another way to destroy Jesus.

4. Some people grumble about Jesus' words and they no longer follow him. • The unbelieving Jews say Jesus is a Samaritan and that he is demon-possessed. They are angry because Jesus is claiming to be

greater than Abraham and all the prophets. They all died, but Jesus is offering eternal life. When Jesus calls himself "I Am," they pick up stones to throw at him, seeking to stone him to death. • The Jews want to stone Jesus because he has said that he and the Father are one. He is a man who is claiming to be God, which is blasphemy.

Faithful unto Death

1. The Spirit, the Helper, will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. The Spirit will guide the disciples into all the truth, glorifying Jesus and declaring what Jesus had taught to them. The Spirit would convict people of sin and of their need for the righteousness only Christ can give. • Only the Holy Spirit can move someone to confess Jesus as Lord.
2. The lie is to deny that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah. Answers will vary, but to abide in Jesus involves listening to his Word and living according to it. • Spirits (and teachers inspired by them) that do not confess that Jesus has come from God, that he is the Son of God, and that he has come in the flesh are false spirits (false teachers). This is what John calls the spirit of antichrist, the spirit that opposes Christ. These false spirits speak according to worldly reason and so people of the world listen to them. We are from God. God hears our prayers and those called by God will listen to our teaching.
3. Those who remain faithful will reign with Christ for all eternity. Those who deny Jesus will be denied by Jesus.

Those who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, trust in Christ Jesus, remaining faithful to him unto death, will receive the “crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). **Read John 16:5-15.** After Jesus ascended to the Father, having completed his earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit, the Helper, would be sent to his disciples. What would the Spirit do? How would the Spirit help people to know the truth about Jesus? **Read 1 Corinthians 12:3.** Who alone can move a person to confess Jesus as Lord?

2. **Read 1 John 2:21-29.** What is the lie concerning Jesus? We are not to reject Jesus, but to abide in him. What does it mean to “abide” in Jesus? **Read 1 John 4:1-6.** Many people today reject Jesus as Savior and Son of God. They have rejected the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. What is the “test” that will reveal the truth concerning the various false spirits that try to lead us astray? Why does the world listen to the false spirits? What encouragement does the apostle John give us in these verses?
3. **Read 2 Timothy 2:8-13.** What promises are given in these verses to those who remain faithful to the truth and do not reject the Son? What terrifying judgment is pronounced against those who reject the truth about Jesus?

Death Shall Be No More

1. Jesus abolished death and brought immortality to light. By his death he destroyed the devil, who had the power of death and delivered us from being enslaved by the fear of death. Answers will vary, but we now speak of death as “falling asleep in Christ.” We know that when we die we will be with the Lord and that our bodies will be raised up, immortal, on the Last Day when Jesus returns.
2. We are buried with Jesus in Baptism and raised to new life, as he was. • Dying is being “away from the body” and being “at home with the Lord.” This body is our earthly home, an earthly tent and we wish to put on our heavenly dwelling. In the resurrection, what is mortal is swallowed up by life.
3. Answers will vary, but Jesus will finally destroy death on the Last Day. Death, which puts bodies in the grave, will no longer be able to hold them there because Jesus will raise us up bodily from the dead, as he was raised. Death will not have the last word. • Our perishable bodies will be made imperishable; what is mortal will be dressed in immortality. Death will be swallowed up in victory. The bodies of those who have not yet died will also be changed in a moment.

DEATH SHALL BE NO MORE

1. **Read Hebrews 2:14-15 and 2 Timothy 1:8-10.** What did Jesus accomplish by his death on the cross? We still mourn the death of loved ones. What does it mean to say that Jesus has “abolished death”?
2. **Read Romans 6:3-4.** How are we united with Jesus in Baptism? **Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-7.** How does the apostle Paul speak of death in these verses?
3. If we should die before the Lord Jesus returns, our souls will enjoy life in his presence while our bodies rest in the ground to await the resurrection to life on the Last Day. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-26.** Jesus has defeated death through his death on the cross. We are no longer captive to the fear of death. What does the apostle Paul mean here when he still calls death “the last enemy to be destroyed” at the end of time? **Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.** What will happen to our bodies on the Last Day when Jesus returns?
4. **Read Revelation 20:11-15 and Revelation 21:1-4.** In this description of the day of judgment, what events indicate that Death has lost its power? What will finally happen to Death itself and to Hades, the place of the dead? What will God remove from us as we live, body and soul, in his presence forever?

4. Death has to give up its victims. Finally, death itself is thrown into the lake of fire. Death will be no more and there will be no more mourning or crying or pain. God will wipe away the tears from our eyes.