



04

SESSION FOUR

Betrayed and Arrested

SESSION SUMMARY

In this session, we will see that Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man, chose to obey His Father and drink the full cup of suffering and wrath in order to purchase eternal life for believers. Even though He would be betrayed and endure false accusations, mockery, physical abuse, and death, Jesus accepted the foretold plan of His Father and fulfilled His identity as the promised Messiah sent to be the Savior of the world.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 26:36-49,56,59-66

THE POINT

Jesus was sent by the Father to face judgment for our sins.

INTRO/STARTER 5-10 MINUTES

Option 1

Tabloid magazines and websites make a lot of money off of celebrity arrests. Hardly a month goes by when another movie or television star is not featured on the cover of a newspaper, website, or magazine with headlines about a shocking arrest. Some are not so shocking, while others are rather surprising.

Perhaps no arrest has ever been so shocking as Jesus' arrest. For years, His disciples assumed His approach to Jerusalem would be an ascent to the throne. Even Jesus' multiple predictions of His own arrest and suffering did not curb the disciples' hopes and expectations, though these predictions may have tempered the excitement a bit. Whether to purify the temple or overthrow the Romans, Jesus was there to lead the people to liberty and life, not to be led to captivity and death—or so they thought. Besides, He was the only innocent person to ever live. After all the good He did, who would want to falsely accuse Him of a crime and see Him convicted?

- **Have you ever been falsely accused or punished for something you didn't do? How did you respond?**

Option 2

Just like the world outside of your school walls, schools have rules that they ask their students to follow. Those rules are in place to keep the students, teachers, and the rest of the staff, safe. Sometimes, teachers come up with rules for their own classrooms to create a better learning environment for their own students. Maybe you're homeschooled and your teacher has strict rules that apply during the hours you focus on school work. And just like laws in the real world, the rules of our schools have consequences for when we don't follow them.

- **What are some school rules or class rules you're asked to follow?**
- **What are some common consequences schools give for broken rules?**

Similarly, God gave the law through Moses to the Israelites. The law required sacrifice for sins. But humans can't obey God's law perfectly. So, because of His love and mercy, God would send His own Son to be the once for all sacrifice for our sins. He would take on every consequence for every law every broken—because He was the only One who could obey those laws perfectly. He was a final, perfect sacrifice. Jesus experienced pain, temporary separation from God, death, and sin—all so that we wouldn't have to experience those things eternally.

HIS STORY

15-20 MINUTES

THE POINT

Jesus was sent by the Father to face judgment for our sins.

CHARACTERS

- **Jesus:** the eternal Son of God; second person of the Trinity
- **The Disciples:** the twelve men Jesus chose to follow Him, take part in His ministry, and share the gospel with others
- **Chief priests and elders:** the religious leaders of Jerusalem during Jesus' earthly ministry

PLOT

Following the last supper, the disciples were still in the dark about what would soon take place. They knew Judas was certainly involved in some suspicious activity, but they did not know the extent. They also had not fully realized that what they celebrated during the Passover pointed to Jesus—the Lamb of God who would atone for the sins of those who believe.

TIMELINE

JESUS IS ARRESTED

*Jesus agrees to drink
the cup of suffering.*

THE CRUCIFIXION

*Jesus as our
substitute sacrifice.*

HE IS RISEN

*The resurrection of
the Son of God.*

JESUS AGREED TO HIS MISSION

Gethsemane was a familiar gathering place for the disciples. *Gethsemane*, a name meaning *oil press*—as it probably had a press on site for the harvesting of oil from the olives littering the landscape—was a little olive tree orchard on the western slope of the Mount of Olives.

The account of the night in the garden of Gethsemane is filled with struggles. The disciples struggled to stay awake. Jesus struggled with the disciples over their inability to remain alert. Later, Peter struggled with the guards, and all the disciples would struggle to understand. But in the garden, the greatest struggle seemed to be within Jesus Himself. As Jacob wrestled with the Lord through the night, Jesus wrestled with the weight of His identity and mission.

Taking leave of His friends, Jesus headed off alone into the night for solitude, as was His custom (Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:16). But this was no customary prayer time. Jesus, the Son of God, was overwhelmed with sorrow as He faced what was before Him.

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.”
³⁷ And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” ³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” ⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”
(Matt. 26:36-46)

Three times Jesus prayed, each time resolving Himself to the mission that awaited Him. After each prayer, He returned to the disciples only to find them asleep. The One who would soon feel forsaken by the Father first tasted the bitterness of being forsaken by His friends.

Having prayed a third time, Jesus rose in the night to the sound of approaching swords, spears, and armor piercing the silence. Flickering lights danced in the darkness that enveloped Him. The time had come.

JESUS' MISSION WAS FORETOLD IN SCRIPTURE

We have previously seen Judas' motivations on display in the events surrounding the last supper. At this point in the narrative, He was fully immersed in his wicked intent. Whereas he had formerly left the upper room alone, he returned accompanied by a mob armed with weapons to suppress any resistance. The chief priests and elders took no chances that this would be the night—the conclusion of years of opposition.

47 While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. ... 56 But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled. (Matt. 26:47-49,56)

No one could take Jesus' life from Him. He had made that clear before (John 10:18). If He wanted to retreat, He could pass through the midst of a crowd (Luke 4:30). If He wanted to fight, He could call down 12 legions of angels (Matt. 26:53). Anyone who can calm a storm, walk on water, and cast out demons can control a little crowd. But rather than demonstrate control through lightning or fire, Jesus exercised the self-control of restraint.

In this moment of crisis, there would be no retreat, no revolt, no rescue. Jesus was resolute in accepting what Scripture had foretold. Everything that occurred on that night was foretold, but this was no comfort for the disciples in the dark. Jesus had steadied Himself in His Father's provision and plan, but the disciples were shaken and afraid. The Old Testament message illuminated the events of this night, but the disciples failed to see it. The narrative would not end without even more fulfillment to come, but the sheep were scattered and the Shepherd was led willingly across the dark valley into the city of Jerusalem.

GOING FURTHER WITH THE STORY

The Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—leave the identity of the swordsman shrouded in secrecy, perhaps because the culprit was still alive and didn't need treason and attempted murder added to the charge of preaching the gospel. By the time John wrote his Gospel, Peter had probably already been martyred, so he felt free to share the name of the guilty party (John 18:10). It should be no surprise that the One who would soon die for His enemies (Rom. 5:8) would show compassion on this injured adversary, demonstrated when He touched the man and healed the severed ear (Luke 22:51).

JESUS AFFIRMED THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS IDENTITY AS THE MESSIAH

For most of His life, Jesus' true identity was hidden under a veil. Occasionally someone would perceive His divine identity, but such revelation was mostly met with a call to secrecy and silence. But this was the moment of truth, the culmination of three decades of life and three years of ministry.

59 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰ but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹ and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'"
⁶² And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." (Matt. 26:59-66)

The high priest's voice dripped with disdain as he asked Jesus to tell them the truth about His identity as the Messiah. Jesus' silence must have infuriated the priests. After all, part of the reason they felt threatened by Jesus was that He endangered their sense of authority and control. They assumed they would have the upper hand on their home court, but Jesus remained silent. Person after person came forward and took the stand to charge Jesus with wrongdoing. However, as is the case when most people lie, the lies contradicted each other.

When Jesus finally spoke, it was in response to a call for an oath to the living God, and He went all in. Though His response appears cryptic to us (v. 64), it most likely represents an idiom that would have been a strong confirmation of the charge.

By equating Himself with the Son of Man from Daniel 7:13-14 and referring to His descent from heaven, Jesus doubled down on the charge of blasphemy in the eyes of the Sanhedrin. At this point there was no mistake to be made. He was either blasphemous or blessed. He was the Christ or guilty of the charge of idolatry. To the leaders, the conclusion was obvious.

With these words, Jesus sealed His fate and set the stage upon which He would lay down His own life. What had begun in the garden in darkness would soon be finished in the light of day on Golgotha.

- **What does this passage tell you about Jesus' commitment to follow through with His Father's plan? (p. 30, PSG)**

TIMELINE

HEARTS ON FIRE
All Scripture points to Jesus.

JESUS SENDS
The disciples witness the risen Christ and receive the peace He brings.

OVERCOMING DOUBTS
Thomas' doubts are satisfied when he sees and touches the risen Jesus.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Christ as Propitiation (p. 29, PSG)

Because of God's righteousness and holiness, humanity's sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ's death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God's wrath against sin. Christ's propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God's great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10), as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Rom. 3:26).

CHRIST CONNECTION

In the garden of Eden, Adam failed to resist the serpent and chose to follow his way over God's. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, the second Adam, submitted fully to His Father's purpose and plan. He willingly submitted to death upon the cross. Jesus demonstrated His identity as the Son of God through His words and actions as He was betrayed, arrested, and put on trial.

YOUR STORY 10-15 MINUTES

GROUP QUESTIONS

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- **Why do you think the disciples were unable to make the connection between the events of this night and Jesus' prophecies of His impending betrayal and death?** *Answers will vary.*
- **Why is it significant that the Old Testament prophesied many of the events surrounding the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus?** *The prophecies of the Old Testament are important because they give us signs and evidences that Jesus really is the Messiah.*
- **What are some occasions in our own lives in which we can follow in Jesus' example and show restraint even when we are persecuted or treated unfairly for our faith?** *Answers will vary.*
- **What are some accusations the world makes against the church? Which of these should we reject or embrace? Why?** *Some accusations include that the church is judgmental, hypocritical, unable to adapt to the changing views of culture, morally behind the times, and so forth.*

HIS STORY

God's Story of Redemption, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

YOUR STORY

Where your story meets His.

YOUR MISSION 10-15 MINUTES



HEAD

The “cup” was a familiar symbol of judgment and wrath in the Old Testament (Ps. 11:6; Isa. 51:17; Ezek. 23:33). Death itself would have been enough to upset even the bravest of men. The threat of torture and crucifixion was an even more imposing imminent reality. But Jesus faced something even worse. Before Him was a cup full of wrath and judgment from the holy God. By drinking it fully, Jesus would know abandonment, sin, desolation, and death.

- **What do we learn about Jesus from this biblical narrative?** *Answers will vary.*
- **How does Jesus’ willingness and resolve to drink “this cup” on our behalf affect you?** *Answers will vary.*



HEART

The fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture is of particular relevance to Matthew as he crafted his Gospel through a Hebrew lens for a Jewish audience. Matthew demonstrated the various ways in which Jesus fulfilled Old Testament expectations and hopes. From birth to these events in the garden of Gethsemane, Matthew saw fulfillment (Matt. 1:22-23; 3:15; 21:4-5). In this account, fulfillment may have occurred for a combination of Scripture passages (Ps. 55:12-14; Zech. 13:7).

- **How can the fulfillment of these prophecies inspire hope and confidence in one’s faith?** *They can bolster and support one’s faith, especially knowing the tremendous odds against Jesus in fulfilling each and every prophecy.*
- **How can you use this knowledge of fulfilled prophecies when talking with a skeptic?** *If a skeptic asks you what evidence you have in believing Jesus to be the Son of God, one level of evidence you can discuss would be the fulfilled prophecies.*



HANDS

Discussing the wrath of God isn’t a popular topic in many American churches. It is a tough truth to accept. This is especially true when we consider that God’s wrath against sin will be justly poured out on people who haven’t found shelter under the gospel of Jesus Christ. By drinking this cup fully, Jesus experienced abandonment, sin, desolation, and death—and Jesus did that for you and me, so that we would not have to know the eternal torment of these realities.

- **Why is it important to talk about God’s wrath to others even though it may be an unpopular topic of conversation?** *The more people know about the wrath their sins deserve, the more grateful they will be to a Savior who was willing to take their place.*
- **How might it dishonor Jesus and His sacrifice if we neglect to talk about God’s wrath?** *If we minimize the wrath of God against sin then we minimize the magnitude of Jesus’ sacrifice for sinners.*

► ADDITIONAL INFO

LEADER PACK

For this session, refer students to pack item #6, which contains an informational chart of prophecies related to Jesus' sufferings.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following additional resources:

- **Leader Training Videos**
- **One Conversations**
- **Midweek Studies (to access your Midweek Study, go to lifeway.com/TGPRisenFAL17)**
- **Circular Timeline Poster**
- **App (for both leader and student)**



Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at

GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

And for ***free online training*** on how to lead a group visit

MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject