

# Our Savior

Session 14 • Matthew 27:27-31,45-54



## ENGAGE

**PREPARE:** Display **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of Matthew 14–28*) and **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: Peter in Matthew's Gospel*).

**READ:** Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 113.

**ASK: What does the amount of space devoted to Jesus's death tell you about its importance?** (p. 113) Affirm Matthew's focus on Jesus's death as central to his Gospel.

**CONTEXT:** Direct attention to **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of Matthew 14–28*). Note that today's session, along with the Easter session studied earlier in the quarter, conclude Matthew's Gospel. Briefly review some highlights from other sessions and emphasize that all of Jesus's teaching, preaching, and healing had pointed to this moment.

**SHARE:** *Matthew emphasized Jesus's death because it opened the door to salvation and a new relationship with God. As we study this session, examine your thoughts about Jesus's death and what it means to your life.*

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

**BACKGROUND:** Highlight again the trials Jesus endured. Point out the last few items

on **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: Peter in Matthew's Gospel*). Note that, along with the trials and humiliation, Jesus endured the betrayal of Judas, the denial by Peter, and the scattering of His other followers.

**SAY:** *But all of these just set the stage for the deeper suffering He was going to experience.*

**READ: Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 27:27-31 aloud** as adults underline examples of how the soldiers treated Him.

**RECAP:** Emphasize the cruelty of the Roman soldiers, as portrayed in this passage:

- **(27:27-31)** Criminals condemned to crucifixion were commonly stripped before being placed on the cross, a way to add humiliation to their agony. Jesus, though, did not have to wait for this element of humiliation; the soldiers stripped him during this mocking phase and they dressed Him in a scarlet robe. Since every king needed a crown, the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They placed a staff in his right hand. Perhaps it was the bamboo cane used for flogging. They spat on him, showing great contempt in a culture where honor was valued highly. They also kept hitting him on the head with the "scepter." The imperfect tense of the verb shows the repeated

nature of this action. Any thorns pointing inward were driven deeper into Jesus's head. The spitting and repeated blows fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 50:6.

**ASK: What emotions does this passage evoke in you?** (p. 115)

**SHARE:** Remind adults that this intense suffering was not without a purpose. Note that while we might see it as a tragedy, Jesus had predicted all of this and understood that it was a necessary part of God's plan of salvation.

**PRAY:** Give adults a few moments for quiet reflection and prayer. Urge them to thank Jesus for the things He experienced on our behalf that day.



### **Passion Week**

Learn more about Jesus's final week on earth—the events that led Him to the cross and the hope that followed.

**OVERVIEW:** Briefly summarize the events of Matthew 27:32-44. Note that being hung with criminals (Isa. 53:12) and having soldiers gamble for His clothes (Ps. 22:18) fulfilled messianic prophecy.

**READ: Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 27:45-49 aloud** as the group listens for the supernatural events related to Jesus's death.

**DISCUSS:** Encourage adults to discuss the source of the darkness. Summarize the following information to provide additional insights:

- **(27:45)** Some skeptics have suggested the darkness was the result of an eclipse. However, Passover always involves a full moon, and an eclipse can occur only during a new moon. The darkness recalls the ninth plague on Egypt (Ex. 10:21-29), along with other Old Testament prophecies that describe God's judgment (see Amos 8:9). Significantly, the Egyptian plague lasted three days, while this darkness lasted three hours. But the darkness had deeper meaning. During this time, God dealt with human sin and the atoning sacrifice for it. Figuratively speaking, God, who is too holy to look on sin (Hab. 1:13), turned His back on the sinner (Isa. 53:5,10).

**ASK: How does Jesus's cry on the cross point to the greatness of our sin?** (p. 115)

**SHARE:** Briefly discuss the crowd's response and why they would have mentioned Elijah. Emphasize that through the entire experience, Jesus remained in complete control of His life and, ultimately, His death.

**READ: Instruct the group to read Matthew 27:50-54 carefully,** paying attention to all the details of Jesus's death.

**ASK: What evidence from the day's events might be used to help others recognize that Jesus was the Son of God?** (p. 115)

**EXAMINE:** Highlight the supernatural events around Jesus's death:

- "A second phenomenal act of God while Jesus was on the cross was the tearing of "the curtain of the sanctuary." This curtain

separated the holy place from the holy of holies and was a symbol of separation (Ex. 26:31-33). The curtain in Herod's temple was reportedly almost twenty-one inches thick. For such a curtain to be split from "top to bottom" could only be an act of God. Symbolically, the barrier between Holy God and unholy humanity was removed by the death of Jesus (Heb. 4:16)." (p. 118, Day Four)

**ASK: How would you respond if you had witnessed these events?**

**DISCUSS:** Lead a brief discussion about the centurion's response. Affirm that he and those with him were eyewitnesses to all that had happened, and it led to a confession of Jesus's deity.

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## CHALLENGE

**SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from this week's Bible passage:

- Jesus's willingness to endure the shame and humiliation of crucifixion leads us to humble surrender and praise.
- We can be confident in knowing that Jesus's death was part of God's redemptive plan.
- The crucifixion of Jesus calls for the response of faith.

**REFLECT:** Remind adults that Jesus's death requires a response from each person. Challenge them to take a few minutes to examine their own hearts and to decide if they have made that response to Jesus. If so, encourage them to identify someone who

still needs to accept Him and to start praying for them.

**DISCUSS:** Lead the group to respond to the **Apply the Text** activity on page 115.

**CHALLENGE:** Encourage the group to reflect on the **Apply the Text** question on page 119 during the coming week. Encourage them to journal their responses and to consider sharing them when you gather for your next Bible study.

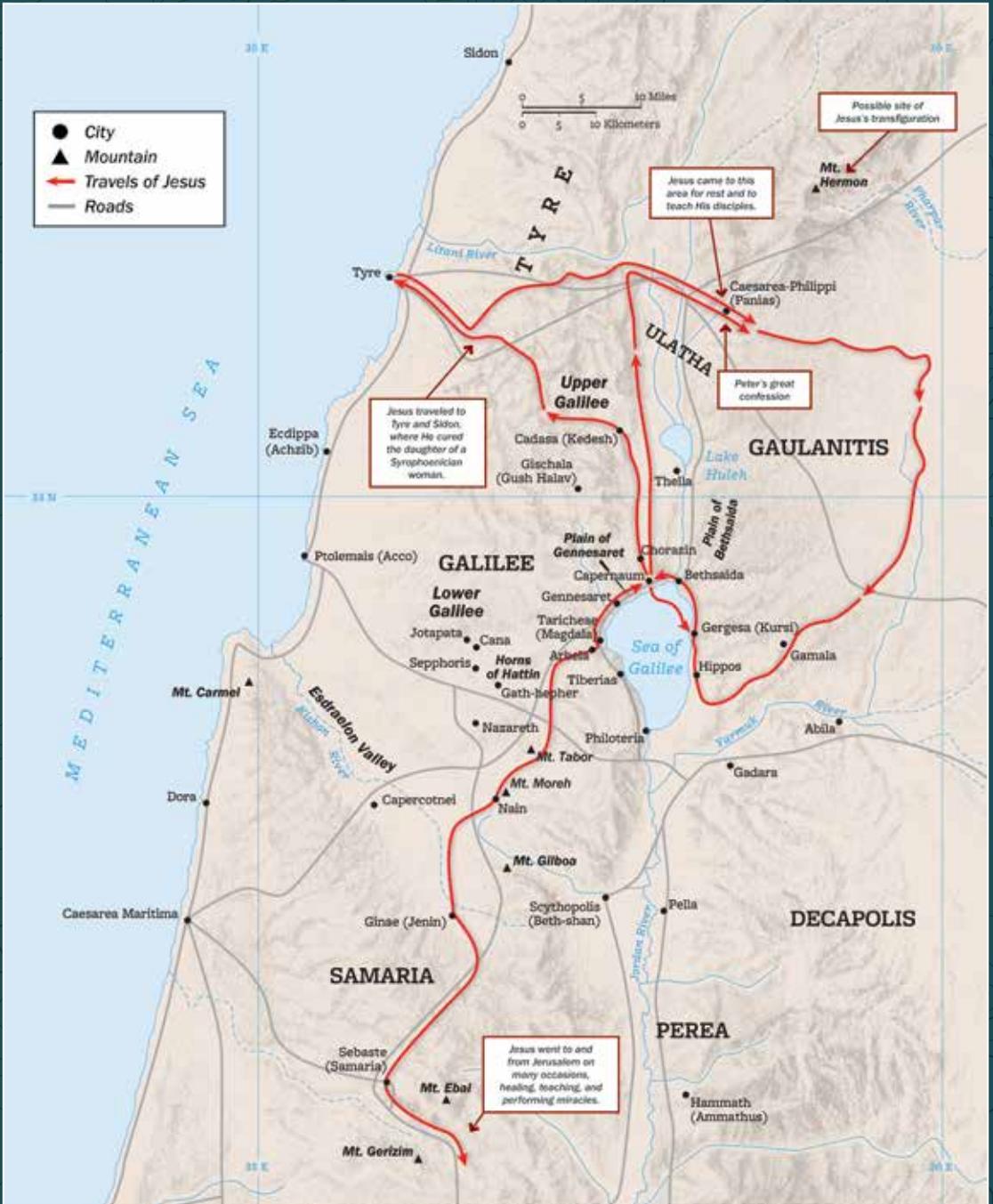
**PRAY:** Invite adults to bow their heads as you read Matthew 27:50-51 aloud. Invite them to respond aloud as God reveals the impact of today's passage on their hearts. Close with prayer, thanking Jesus for His death, which provided access to God.

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## AFTER THE SESSION

Send adults a group text or email during the week. Remind them that this was the final session in Matthew's Gospel. Share that the group will be starting a new study in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Encourage them to come and to invite a friend or family member to join them.

# JESUS'S MINISTRY BEYOND GALILEE



"Jesus's Ministry Beyond Galilee" is based on "The Ministry of Jesus Beyond Galilee," Holman Bible Atlas (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1998), p. 224. Used with permission.

## MATTHEW 14–28

Turning points are key to any story. A character moving in one direction suddenly transitions to a new path. Overcoming obstacles, the hero wins in the end. Matthew 14–28 represents a turning point in the life and ministry of Jesus. After preaching and healing in Galilee, Christ turned His face toward Jerusalem. His steps ultimately took Him to a cross—and an empty tomb. As believers, we benefit from this turning point. Through His example, we learn how to face our fears, overcome opposition, sacrifice for others, and embrace the hope that only He provides. By studying Matthew 14–28, we gain a better understanding of what it means to live out our faith each day—and how we can move forward to make disciples of all nations.

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