FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 4 · GRADES 4-6

Student Lesson

Jesus Saves Me: He Is Risen! | The Cross and the Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30)

Bible reading: Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30

The Cross and the Empty Tomb

The cross was planned long before it happened. Isaiah wrote that the Messiah would be "wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5). John the Baptist called Jesus "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus said Himself that He would be killed and be raised the third day (Matthew 16:21).

Crucifixion was a slave's punishment, one of the cruelest deaths ever invented. Jesus was mocked, spit on, beaten, and crowned with thorns (Matthew 27:27-31). Above His head they wrote, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:37). Yet Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). Darkness covered the land, and Jesus cried, "It is finished!" (John 19:30).

When Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom and the earth quaked (Matthew 27:51). The centurion said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:54). Why did Jesus die? "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Joseph of Arimathea, a rich disciple, laid Jesus in his own new tomb and rolled a large stone against the door (Matthew 27:57-60). The chief priests remembered that Jesus said He would rise, so Pilate let them seal the stone and set a guard (Matthew 27:62-66).

Early on the first day of the week, the women came to the tomb. A great earthquake shook the ground, an angel rolled back the stone and sat on it, and the guards became like dead men (Matthew 28:1-4). The angel said, "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said" (Matthew 28:6). The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out, but to let the witnesses in!

Jesus met the women and said, "Rejoice!" (Matthew 28:9). Paul later summed up the gospel: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Tomorrow we will learn how people obeyed this good news.

> "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."
> **Matthew 28:6 (NKJV)**

Four points to remember

- Jesus, the sinless Son of God, willingly died on the cross for our sins (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb that was sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:57-66).
- On the third day Jesus rose from the dead, just as He said (Matthew 28:6; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

- Because Jesus lives, we have forgiveness, hope, and good news to tell (Matthew 28:7).

Think it through

1. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them.” What does that show about Him?
2. Why do you think the leaders put guards at the tomb?
3. Why was the stone rolled away if Jesus was already risen?
4. Read Romans 5:8. How does the cross show God’s love?

Following Jesus this week: I will thank Jesus for the cross by