

JOHN 18-19

PILATE'S PLOT



TEACH IT COFFEEHOUSE SESSION 11

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- his or her own Bible
- optional: the student journal page for Session 11, including an “on your own” exercise (Using the student journal page is optional in the coffeehouse setting since table space will be limited.)

You'll also need—

- images of famous or local bridges (printed or viewed on a laptop)
- a pack of pencils with erasers
- optional: a few spare Bibles for students who've forgotten theirs

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 11

As students experience this session, they will—

- examine the details of Jesus' trial and crucifixion.
- gain understanding of Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God.
- be challenged to make Jesus' sacrifice a motivation for living life in a different way.

PRAYER

Once the group has gathered, open in prayer. Pray that students can put aside the stress of the day in order to be moved by the most sacred event of all time—Jesus' death on the cross.

OPEN

Name That Bridge

Begin with a game on famous bridges. Gather images of the bridges noted below or a few bridges in your area. You can print or project the images or show them on a laptop if that's convenient. As you show each image, give a point to whoever identifies it first. Feel free to give a few “fun facts” you might learn in your search about each bridge after the students name it. (Fun-fact examples: The London Tower Bridge took more than eight years to construct. The Roebling Bridge in Cincinnati served as the prototype for the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City. People first envisioned the Mackinac Bridge in the 1880s, but it didn't open for traffic until the 1950s.)

- London Tower Bridge
- Brooklyn Bridge
- Roebling Bridge
- Sydney Harbor Bridge
- Sunshine Skyway Bridge
- George Washington Bridge
- Mackinac Bridge
- New River Gorge Bridge
- Golden Gate Bridge

Transition into the study with the following questions. Explain that ever since Adam and Eve sinned, a gap has separated man and God. And God has been on a quest to bridge that gap. Ask—

What are some things God has used throughout history to bridge the gap between us and him?

- He used offerings (Abel, Noah).
- He used a rainbow (Noah).
- He used the Ten Commandments, written on stone (i.e., the “old covenant” or Law).
- He used animal sacrifices (Moses, Israel).
- He has used the Bible.

How does God bridge that gap for us today?

It’s an obvious question, but get the answer on record: Jesus.

What connections or similarities do you see between Jesus and the other “bridges” God has used?

- Jesus is the perfect offering.
- The rainbow was a promise that God would never destroy mankind by a flood; Jesus promised that we’ll never be destroyed if we believe in him.
- Jesus was the initiator of a “new covenant” written on hearts.
- Jesus’ blood, which came from the ultimate sacrifice of death, cleanses us from sin.

What do people often use to try to build their own bridges to God apart from Jesus?

Obviously answers will vary, but try to draw out responses such as logic, science, reasoning, philosophy, or even good works.

3. Pre-Dig

First Blood

Explain that the passage the group will look at first shows the culmination of God’s grand, eternal plan to redeem a sinful world. The concept of offering his own Son as a sacrifice for sinful people isn’t something that had just occurred to God. He’d been dropping hints about this plan for centuries.

To help them get the maximum impact as they study Jesus’ crucifixion, give them a quick refresher on God’s grand plan:

- **More than any other Gospel writer, John portrays Jesus as the Lamb of God.**
- **John’s Jewish readers would have easily understood the significance of this title—as your group will too in just a few minutes.**

Ask students to read Exodus 12:1-15 from their Bibles. Tell them—

- 1. Look for everything you learn about the lamb.**
- 2. Look for everything you learn about blood, along with everything the blood would do.**

When most have finished (it’s okay if some haven’t), ask what they learned about the lamb.

The Lamb

- There was one lamb for each household (v. 3).
- The lamb was taken on the 10th day of the first month of the year (v. 2-3).
- The lamb was a year-old male without defect (v. 5).
- The lamb was taken care of until the 14th day (v. 6).
- The lamb was slaughtered at twilight (v. 6).
- Its blood was to be put on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses (v. 7).

Then ask—

How do you think the lamb felt about this process?

Elicit the observation that the lamb was completely innocent—in fact, it was a perfect lamb that had done nothing wrong.

How long did they keep the lamb before sacrificing it?

Let the group figure this out. They should come up with four days. Point out that this was enough time to get attached to the lamb, just like we get attached to our pets today.

What did God say he would do when he saw the blood on the houses?

He would “pass over” the house, and no destructive plague would touch it. He would not permit the destroyer to enter the house and strike the people down.

So what role, in essence, did the blood of the lamb play in their lives?

It saved them. It meant the difference between death and life!

How significant do you think it was that Jesus was killed at the exact time of the Passover feast?

Obviously, the Passover (God’s idea) foreshadowed Jesus’ death perfectly—proving that God had this plan in mind centuries before it ever happened.

4. Digging In

Power-Play Ploy

Fast-forward roughly 1,475 years⁵. Share with your group that Jesus’ sacrifice began with a trial that for all practical purposes wasn’t a trial, but a power play between men desperate for control. The scene they’re about to study will be familiar to those who’ve grown up in the church. But encourage your group to read John 18:28–19:16 from their Bibles as if they’re the very first readers of John’s Gospel. Tell them—

1. Look for everything the Jewish leaders did to coerce Pilate into sentencing Jesus to death.

2. Look for everything Pilate said or did to try to avoid sentencing Jesus.

After most have finished, discuss this scene between Pilate and the Jewish leaders.

What ploys did the Jewish leaders use to coerce Pilate into crucifying Jesus?

-First they tried to get Pilate to grant them a favor, no questions asked.

-Then they questioned Pilate’s loyalty to Caesar because he was being lenient toward someone who claimed to be king (thus opposing Caesar).

-Their declaration that they had no king but Caesar had to have been a manipulative ploy; it went against everything the Jews believed about God.

What were the Jewish leaders willing to give up in order to have Jesus executed?

They did the very thing they falsely accused Jesus of doing: They blasphemed God by declaring they had no king but Caesar.

⁵ Biblical scholars vary on dates. The dates we’ve used here are based on those used in *The International Inductive Study Bible* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1992).

5. Digging Deeper

“Corrupt and Conniving” Meets “Undefiled and Spotless”

Now ask the group to read John 19:1-37. (They’ve already read part of it, so urge them to get even more out of the second read.) Before they get going, give these instructions:

- 1. Picture yourself just a few feet away from Jesus during the events you’re about to read. As you read the passage, circle every phrase that describes an action done to Jesus’ physical body, such as any act that would have drawn blood.**
- 2. If you are hesitant about marking in your Bibles, write lightly so you can erase the markings later. If you’re still not comfortable with it, that’s okay. Just eyeball the passage and lock in on the actions done to Jesus’ physical body.**
- 3. Remember, when you read this passage you’re witnessing the event in history that makes it possible for you to be freed from your sins and thus connected to God. Jesus had each one of you in mind while this action was taking place.**

When most have finished, ask them to share, in order, every action done to Jesus’ body. Here are some observations:

What They Did to Jesus

- They flogged him (v. 1).
- They put a crown of thorns on his head (v. 2).
- They clothed him in a purple robe (v. 2).
- They struck him in the face (v. 3).
- They crucified him (v. 18).
- They gave him a sponge of wine vinegar, supposedly to quench his thirst (v. 29).
- They pierced his side with a spear (v. 34).

6. Taking It Inward

Broken and Spilled

After compiling this list, ask the group what else they observed in this scene. Then discuss—

What parallels do you see between the sacrifice of the Passover lamb and Jesus’ death?

Elicit that in both cases, blood was shed. Also, neither the lamb nor Jesus had done anything wrong. Both were innocent and without defect.

The passages below will tell students much more about the sacrifice Jesus made as the Lamb of God. Invite them to read these passages on their own to see what they can learn about Jesus’ sacrifice as the Lamb of God. If you’re using the optional student journal pages, there is space for them to make notes.

After they’ve read the passages, discuss the questions below.

John 1:29	1 Peter 1:18-21	Revelation 5:9-13
<i>John the Baptist called Jesus “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”</i>	<i>-Jesus was a lamb without blemish or defect. -His precious blood redeemed us from an empty way of life.</i>	<i>-The Lamb was slain. -With his blood he purchased men for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation. -The Lamb is worthy of power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise.</i>

Remind your students about the information they learned regarding the Passover lamb and its blood. (See Pre-Dig above.)

What did the lamb's blood protect the people of Israel from?

If you've accepted Jesus' sacrifice for your sins, what does his blood protect you from?

Let's get personal. 1 Peter says that Jesus' blood redeems us from an "empty way of life." A few questions:

How would you define an empty way of life?

How would you define a fulfilled way of life?

Which is your life more like?

7. Wrapping It Up

Name Drop

Close your session by asking students to complete this sentence:

"Because Jesus' sacrifice has cleansed me and bridged the gap between God and me, I will..."

Discuss the connection between gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice and how we live on a daily basis—our lifestyle, attitudes, actions, and thoughts. Explore how Jesus' blood might deliver us from "an empty way of life."