

**Study Preparation**  
**Sunday, April 1, 2012**

**MONDAY STUDY**

**Jesus Died for Our Sins**

What is the difference between a meaningless death and a meaningful sacrifice?

**Read Matthew 26:26-29 and answer the following questions:**

- *What is the difference between a meaningless death and a meaningful sacrifice?*
- *Imagine the sentence was simply “Jesus died.” How does what follows the word “for” change Jesus’ death from meaningless to meaningful?*
- *Suppose you simply asked people on the street, “Why did Jesus die?” What answers would you expect?*
- *What is the context of this passage? What has just happened? What is about to happen?*
- *Can anyone think of another time the disciples saw Jesus bless bread, break it, and give it to the disciples? (The exact same words are used in Matthew’s account of the feeding of the 5,000 in Matt. 14:19-21). Do you think the disciples understood that Jesus’ body was not broken for them alone, but that this was intended to be shared?*
- *Any practicing Jew understood that eating blood was expressly forbidden in the law (Lev. 3:17 and nine other times in Leviticus and Deuteronomy). So how do you think they reacted to Jesus?*
- *You may also remember that Jesus’ teaching to eat His flesh and drink His blood in John 6 caused many people to stop following Him (see John 6:53,66). Now, Jesus repeated the command. Do you think those who had stayed with Him up to this point realized the importance of what He was saying?*
- *What connection exists between the shedding of blood and the forgiveness of sin? (According to Hebrews 9:22, you can’t have one without the other).*
- *How does this connection make us responsible also for the death of Jesus? (It is because of our sins that Christ’s blood had to be shed in the first place)*
- *What do you think Christians might say if asked why we practice the Lord’s Supper?*

**Summary:** Jesus death was not simply a nice, humble way to keep peace in the social and political realms. His death was prophesied in the Old Testament with a specific purpose, fully pleasing to God the Father for the benefit of lost sinners.

**TUESDAY STUDY**

**Read Matthew 26:36-39 and answer the following questions:**

- *How many disciples went to the Garden with Jesus? (presumably all of them except for Judas. However, Jesus took three of them— Peter, James, and John, a little further).*
- *Why do you think Jesus took these three deeper into the Garden with Him?*
- *If you have ever been really distressed or sad, who did you want to have close to you?*
- *Why was Jesus “swallowed up in sorrow” if He knew this was God’s plan all along?*
- *What do these verses reveal about the humanity of Jesus?*
- *What do they reveal about the obedience of Jesus?*
- *Why was it important that Jesus fulfill the plan of God even though it cost Him suffering and shame?*
- *Have your personal desires ever been in conflict with what you believed to be God’s plan? If so, which one won?*

- *What factors help you choose God's will even when you know that it might cost you to follow it?*

**Summary:** God's first priority is His own glory. While this would be arrogant and self-centered for any human being, for God, it is the only thing that makes sense. If God had anything besides His own glory as His primary concern, then that thing would be in the place of God. So it pleased God to crush Jesus because Jesus bearing the transgressions of all humanity would bring glory to God. And as this example makes it clear, we benefit when God brings glory to Himself!

### **WEDNESDAY STUDY**

**Read Matthew 27:45-46, 50-54 and answer the following questions:**

- *What signs that accompanied Jesus' death, according to verses 51-53?*
- *Had you been standing at the foot of the cross, what impact would darkness covering the land from noon until three have on you?*
- *What is the significance of the curtain of the sanctuary splitting from "top to bottom?" (The curtain separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of the Temple. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:14 that Christ has broken down the dividing wall between us and God.)*
- *What do these supernatural signs have to do with Jesus as Son of God?*
- *What is significant about the centurion's witness? (It is significant that a non-Jew was the first to affirm Jesus' divinity after the crucifixion.)*
- *Without earthquakes and people rising from the dead, how do you reveal God's son to an unbelieving world every day?*

**Summary:** Psalm 22, written hundreds of years before crucifixion as a method of execution was even invented. Verse 7 describes those walking by hurling insults at the victim of crucifixion. The Pharisees and teachers of the law virtually quoted verse 8 (maybe without even realizing it) in Matthew 27:41-42. Verse 16 describes the piercing of the hands and feet. Verse 18 says, "They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing." It is hard to believe someone could study Psalm 22 and NOT believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. But as descriptive as Psalm 22 is of the crucifixion, it is just as descriptive of how Jesus' crucifixion revealed Him as God's Son and our Messiah.

### **THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY STUDY**

Read additional articles contained in this packet:

1. A Description of Gethsemane;
2. Background for Jesus' Covenant;
3. The Roman Centurion;