

SABBATH SCHOOL

Level 5 • Unit 5 • Week 4

CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS BEFORE AND AFTER CHRIST'S DEATH

OBJECTIVE:

To show how Jesus fulfilled the sign He gave to show that He was the Messiah—being resurrected exactly three days and three nights after He was buried. Also to show the deep significance of Christ being crucified on Passover.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Say: Four different writers of the New Testament tell the life of Jesus Christ. They are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Do: Hand out the activity "Get to Know the Gospel Writers." Complete with students.

BIBLE LESSON:

Say: "Oh yeah? Well prove it!" Have you ever heard these words.

Ask: Have you ever had other children doubt that you could do something? For example, being able to jump rope 100 times without missing, maybe riding one's bike with no hands, doing some impressive skateboard jumps or getting a super high score on a certain video game.

Explain: Even though the scribes and Pharisees knew that Jesus was a man of God, they demanded that He prove it. Jesus offered just one sign to prove that He was indeed the Son of God and that was the sign of Jonah.

Ask: What was this sign of Jonah according to Matthew 12:40?

Explain: Jonah was a prophet and his story is told in the Old Testament book of Jonah. Because Jonah tried to get out of doing what God wanted him to do, God allowed him to be thrown overboard from a ship and then be swallowed by a great fish. Being in this great fish for Jonah was like being in a watery grave.

Ask: How long was Jonah in this watery grave? Let's turn to Jonah 1:17 to find out.

Say: Now remember Jesus said He would be in the heart of the earth after He died for the same period of three days and three nights. So let's explore and find out what day Jesus died on and when He was resurrected and see if He was in the grave three days and three nights as He said.

Ask: On what special day did Jesus Christ die (Matthew 26:2)?

Say: Just as Jesus said He would be, He was crucified on the day of Passover. The year that Christ died Passover was on a Wednesday. So we know that Jesus died on a Wednesday.

It was no accident that Jesus died on Passover. Does anyone know what the Israelites did on the first Passover in Egypt?

Say: The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. God through Moses had told Pharaoh to free them. Pharaoh stubbornly refused, so God decided to destroy all the firstborn in Egypt. Killing a lamb and spreading its blood over the top of the door would spare the firstborn of the Israelites. The night that all of this happened became known as the Passover since the death angel "passed over" the houses with the blood of the lamb on them.

Every year after that the Israelites were supposed to remember the Passover and kill a lamb. All those lambs pointed to Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God (1 Corinthians 5: 7 and John 1:29), who shed His blood for our sins.

Ask: What time on Passover did Jesus Christ die?

Say: According to Matthew 27:45-50 it was about the ninth hour. In those days they started counting the hours at 6 a.m. So when would the ninth hour be? Let's count. The first hour would be 7 a.m. The second... [count together with the class] ...the ninth hour would be 3 p.m. So Jesus died at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Ask: When was Jesus buried?

We are told in Luke 23:54 that as Jesus was being laid in the tomb, the Sabbath was drawing near, so the sun was setting. So Jesus was buried very close to sunset on Wednesday. In order to fulfill the sign that He gave, He would have to be risen from the dead exactly three days and three nights later.

But wait a minute! Why is the Sabbath drawing near if Jesus died on a Wednesday? Isn't the Sabbath on Saturday?

Say: John gives us the answer. In John 19:31 we are told that this particular Sabbath was not the ordinary weekly Sabbath. John tells us that Sabbath was a high day. This was one of God's annual Holy Days!

Ask: Is there a Holy Day that follows Passover?

Say: Yes! Every year we keep that holy day. It is the First Day of Unleavened Bread. That year it came on the Thursday after Passover.

So now let's count three days and three nights from the time that Jesus was buried, and see if the Bible shows us if that was when He was raised.

Wednesday evening + Thursday evening + Friday evening = three nights.

And the day periods: Thursday + Friday + Sabbath = three days.

Say: So Jesus would rise on the weekly Sabbath very close to sunset. And what does the Bible show us? Let's turn to Luke 24:1-2. We find that Mary Magdalene and another Mary came to the tomb very early Sunday morning. It was so early, in fact, that it was still dark. When they got to the tomb, they found that Jesus was already gone, but they encountered an angel at the tomb who told them that Jesus had already risen. He was already gone by Sunday morning because He was resurrected the evening before.

So Jesus' sign was fulfilled: He rose after being in the tomb three days and three nights (Matthew 28:6).

LESSON APPLICATION:

Create "on-the-scene reports."

Directions: Have some of the students be reporters and some people being interviewed. Have one reporter on the scene at Mary's house in Bethany interviewing a person who perhaps had seen Judas leave in an angry huff.

Then switch to a street scene in Jerusalem. This is where the disciples encountered the man carrying a pitcher of water who then led them to the upper room where they partook of the Passover with Jesus.

Other possible interview scenes:

- Garden of Gethsemane (man witnessing the healing of Malchus' ear).

- High priest's courtyard (man witnessing Peter's denial and Judas' anguish).
- The crucifixion site, Golgotha (the reporter can interview people and note the earthquake at Christ's death, the darkness and seeing people alive and walking around who were once dead).
- After Christ's resurrection (the streets of Jerusalem buzzing with excitement).

MUSIC:

Teacher's choice from United Church of God hymnal.

MEMORY VERSE:

Matthew 12:40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

GET TO KNOW THE GOSPEL WRITERS

Directions: Fill in the blanks below by using the scriptures to understand these four men and the gospels that God inspired them to write.

1. Matthew was also known by another name which was _____ (Matthew 9:9 and Mark 2:14). He was a tax collector. Another name for a tax collector at that time was a _____ (Matthew 9:11 KJV).
2. Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jewish people to make plain to them that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah—the coming King. He would often show how the events in Jesus' life fulfilled the _____ Testament Prophecies. For instance, when John the Baptist came on the scene, Matthew showed that he fulfilled what was written in Isaiah 40:3, which said that John was "The voice of one crying in the _____" (Matthew 3:3).
3. Mark, who was also called _____ (Acts 12:12,) was the cousin of a companion of Paul's named _____ (Colossians 4:10). Instead of writing for the Jews as Matthew did, Mark wrote for the gentiles, particularly the Romans.
4. Luke, the author of the third gospel is called the beloved _____ (Colossians 4:14) or doctor. Luke wrote the events of Christ's life down for a man known as _____ (Luke 1:3). He also wrote the book titled the _____ of the Apostles.
5. John, known as the disciple whom Jesus _____ (John 21:20), wrote the fourth gospel, as well as 1, 2 and 3 John and the book of _____, the last book of the Bible. John and his brother James were known as the "Sons of _____" (Mark 3:17).

family activity

THE POINT:

To show how Jesus fulfilled the sign He gave to show that He was the Messiah—being resurrected exactly three days and three nights after He was buried. Also to show the deep significance of Christ being crucified on Passover.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

As a family, fill in the events that happened the last five days of Christ's life.

Day 1:

Day 2:

Day 3:

Day 4:

Final Day:

MEMORY VERSE:

Matthew 12:40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."