

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN**FINISHED**

STUDENT LESSON

Open it

1. If you could predict one thing about the future, what would that be and why?

Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read John 19:17–37.

2. Who was carrying the cross Jesus would be crucified on?
3. Where was Jesus crucified?
4. How many others were crucified with Jesus?
5. Who posted the sign on the cross, and what did it say?
6. How did the soldiers decide who got Jesus's robe ?
7. Who stood near the cross?
8. What did they give Jesus to drink?
9. What did Jesus say before He gave up His spirit?
10. What did the solders do instead of breaking Jesus' legs?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: Fulfilled!

Read John 19:17–37.

Back when I was a junior in high school, the Chicago Bears had just hired a new head coach and picked up Khalil Mack. The Bears got an elite defensive beast and an offensive guru to help out young QB Mitch Trubisky. Things were looking good. Despite these key moves, a lot of fans still had their doubts, including one of my teachers from high school. The Bears had not even played their first game yet, and I made a bet with him that they were going to go 12–4 that season. If I won he had to buy me lunch, and vice versa. Correctly predicting the record of an NFL team doesn't seem entirely hard to do. If you strip it down to the basics I had a 1/16 chance to be correct, not accounting for everything that happens on the field during the game. Nevertheless, when the Bears ended with a record of 12–4 everyone was impressed.

In today's passage, a prophecy from Psalm 22:18 was fulfilled that they would cast lots for Jesus' garments and also that none of His bones would be broken (Ex 12:46, Num 9:12, Psalm 34:20) and that His body would be pierced (Zech 12:10).

Jesus' birthplace in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), His Galilean heritage (Isaiah 9:1–7), and the peculiar circumstances surrounding His burial (Isaiah 53:9) are among many prophecies which foretell His coming. According to Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks*, the probabilities that any one person fulfilled merely eight of the numerous prophecies predicting the Messiah are 1 in 10^{17} (100,000,000,000,000,000).

Here is an illustration from Josh McDowell:

“Suppose you took the state of Texas and spread silver dollars two feet deep across the whole state, then marked just one of them and buried it somewhere in the state. Then, if you chose one person, blindfolded him, and told him to pick just one silver dollar, his chances of getting the marked one on his first try would be one in 10 to the 17th power!”

The above illustration shows the odds of Jesus just fulfilling 8 prophecies. There are over 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled in His lifetime!”

In this passage alone Jesus fulfills 5 prophecies, and throughout His life He fulfilled many more. The fulfillment of prophecy is not just a random coincidence, but God following through on His promises.

11. How does fulfillment of prophecies through Jesus' life give you confidence that the Bible is true and Jesus is real?

¹ Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Vol. 1, pp. 144, 167

Day 3 — Today's Theme: Carry Your Cross

Read John 19:17–18.

“Once upon a time there was an old woman who used to meditate on the bank of the Ganges. One morning, finishing her meditation, she saw a scorpion floating helplessly in the strong current. As the scorpion was pulled closer, it got caught in roots that branched out far into the river. The scorpion struggled frantically to free itself but got more and more entangled. She immediately reached out to the drowning scorpion, which, as soon as she touched it, stung her.

The old woman withdrew her hand but, having regained her balance, once again tried to save the creature. Every time she tried, however, the scorpion's tail stung her so badly that her hands became bloody and her face distorted with pain. A passerby who saw the old woman struggling with the scorpion shouted, “What's wrong with you, fool! Do you want to kill yourself to save that ugly thing?” Looking into the stranger's eyes, she answered, “Because it is the nature of the scorpion to sting, why should I deny my own nature to save it?”²

This story from Joan Chittister tells us about a scorpion trying to be saved by a woman. Even though the scorpion is trying not to die, it is not letting the woman save it and continues trying to save itself. Dying to yourself doesn't mean letting yourself die per se, but to let go of your sinful ways and give yourself fully to Jesus. The scorpion in this story would not let go of its nature and kept stinging the woman so she could not save it. If it were to let go of its nature and let the woman save it from drowning, then it would not die.

Jesus told His disciples just hours before He carried His cross to Golgotha that “*whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me.*”

If we try to save our life here on this earth we will lose our eternity with God in heaven, but if we give our lives to Jesus, we will have eternal life with Him in heaven. However, it's human nature to sin. Because of that we are separated from God, and like the scorpion, are going to die. Galatians 2:19–21 says that “*For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!*” It's because Jesus carried His cross that we can follow Him and carry our own.

When Paul says that he died in this passage, he means his sinful nature has died, and he has been reborn in Christ. Dying to yourself isn't just a one-time event, but a lifelong process through sanctification. When we die to ourselves it is a decision that we make every day to pick up our crosses, and continuously follow Christ and believe in Him.

12. How are you sometimes like the scorpion in your own life?

13. What are some things you try to hold onto?

14. What does it look like for you to die to yourself and carry your own cross?

² Joan Chittister, “What Does It Mean To Be Human?”

Day 4 — Today's Theme: It is Finished

Read John 19:30.

Whenever I am at work I have a list of things I have to get done by a certain time. Most of the time it seems like the list never ends. So when I finish the list, a sense of satisfaction and relief comes over me. I got the same feeling with school when I had to write an essay, or when I do chores at home. But no matter how much I complete, there will always be another task later, another essay I'll have to write, and another time that the lawn needs to be mowed. No matter how many times I do all of that, my work will never be permanently finished. I may get moments of temporary completion, but something else always comes up. When Jesus lived here on earth, God had a plan for Him to complete, and when Jesus died on the cross, He had completed all that God had sent Him to do. Unlike my work, Jesus' work lasts forever.

Sometimes when I start something, I don't always finish it. I think "I'll come back to it later," but oftentimes I don't. I'll leave multiple things not fully completed and it leaves a mess that I have to clean up later when I could have just avoided the mess in this first place. God always completes what He has started. He never leaves something behind that turns into a mess and always follows through on His work. In Philippians 1:6 it says, "*being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*"

God will continue to work in our lives "until the day of Christ Jesus" and will not leave us uncompleted. Jesus had to sacrifice His life on the cross for us to be able to have this relationship with God, and for Him to complete us. Our sin inhibits us from having this relationship with God, and our punishment for sin is death. In that moment, on the cross, Jesus took on that punishment for us; He paid our debt so that we could spend eternity with Him in heaven. Jesus' work on earth was finished with His death on the cross. Jesus was sent to earth to seek and save that which is lost (Luke 19:10), to provide atonement for the sins of all who would ever believe in Him (Romans 3:23–25), and to reconcile sinful men to a holy God (2 Corinthians 5:18–19). No one else in history could do any of those things except Jesus, who is God in flesh.

"It is finished." Three small, simple words. But they are three small, simple words full of great significance. The Greek word translated "it is finished" is *tetelestai*, an accounting term that means "paid in full." When *tetelestai* was used, it meant that everything was complete and perfect, forever. Your penalty has been paid in full by the blood of Jesus washing away your sins forever if you will believe in Him and Him alone. Jesus took on your sins to satisfy your debt before the Father. When Jesus was on the cross, God treated Jesus as if He lived your life so that God could treat us as if we had lived Jesus' life.

15. What are some ways that the world opposes the message and hope of Jesus' words, "It is finished"? How can you as a believer stand firm in the midst of those opposing messages and influences?

16. How is it that Paul can tell us to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in us" and that we can rest in Jesus' finished work at the same time?