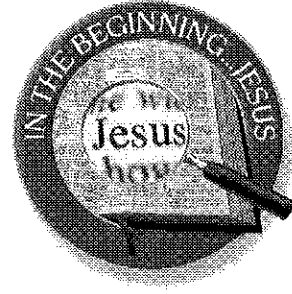


In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 2 Back to the Beginning

Themes:

- The whole Bible is necessary for understanding the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross.
- The Bible has an intentional order.
- Jesus is the key to understanding the Bible.
- The solution to the mystery of Jesus and the cross begins in Genesis.
- God is the main character in the story of the Bible.

Scripture:

Luke 24:26-27; Genesis 1:1

Memory Verse:

Isaiah 53:3a

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible—Mark some of the passages that you will be reading from the Bible ahead of time for this lesson so you can quickly read them as “clues.”
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* Poster (from Lesson 1).
- Resource Packet:
 - WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHO? WHY? (from Lesson 1).
 - CLUES (from Lesson 1).
 - JESUS IS THE KEY A-B—Assembly instructions also in Resource Packet.
 - SENTENCE FRAGMENTS 1-4—Cut the pieces along the solid lines.
 - ONE ETERNAL CREATOR GOD.
 - Bible Clue Card #1.
- Magnifying glass (for use in reading the clue card).
- Optional: A paperback mystery book that will be torn in half.
- White board, or large sheet of paper and markers.

Optional Visual for Application (Small Group Leaders):

- A lockable container with a key. Place an unusual object inside the container (something that the children aren't likely to correctly guess) and lock the container. Also, have some assorted keys.

Lesson

Display the *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster from Lesson 1.

Display the **WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHO? WHY?** visual and ask: *What happened here?* [Jesus died on a cross.] *Where did it happen?* [Outside the city of Jerusalem.] *When did it happen?* [During the Jewish Passover—about 2,000 years ago.] *Did the people who were there at the time of Jesus' death understand who did it?* [No.] *Did they truly understand why Jesus' died?* [No.] *Why not?* [It had been kept secret. They didn't know the whole story yet. They didn't have the whole Bible.]

Optional illustration: **Display** the paperback mystery book. Choose two children to come to the front and tell the class to pretend the following scenario:

Suppose [child's name] and [child's name] each want to read this exciting mystery story. What if I did the following? (Open the book, tear it down the middle of the binding, and give each child a half.) Would [child's name] and [child's name] be able to solve the mystery?

Point out that the child with the last half of the book would know “who done it and why,” but wouldn't know what had been done. The child with the first half of the book would know what was done, but not who did it or why. You need the **WHOLE** story to solve the mystery.

Point to the bottom of the poster and remind the children that although the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross was kept secret for long ages, it has now been revealed because we now have the **WHOLE** story. We have both the Old and New Testaments. **Display** the Bible. Emphasize that the **WHOLE** Bible is necessary for understanding the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross.

Display the **CLUES** visual from Lesson 1. Recall that clues are hints that help us solve a mystery. Point to the picture of the person on the visual. Ask the children what they would call a person who looks for clues to solve a mystery. [A detective.] Remind the children that at the end of the first lesson you said they would be acting as detectives during our lessons—looking for clues to solve the greatest mystery of all—who killed Jesus and why He was killed. Where will we need to look for these clues? [In the Bible.] The Bible contains the “clues” to the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross.

Tell the children that you will start looking for clues by reading from the Bible—from both Old and New Testaments. [Have the passages marked ahead of time so that you can turn to each and read through it quickly. As you read, the verses should flow together as one continuous thought.]

***Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
(1 Corinthians 5:6b)***

***So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders.
(Exodus 12:34)***

They are like a heated oven whose baker ceases to stir the fire, from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened. (Hosea 7:4b)

Ask: *Was this a good way to look for Bible clues? Why not?* [Allow the children to respond.]

Illustration: Have four children come up and each take a **SENTENCE FRAGMENT**. Tell the children that the fragments (or portions) are parts of a complete sentence. Their job is to use the fragments to put together the correct sentence. When the children are finished, have them hold their signs in order (left to right) in front of the class:

A PRETTY BLUE BIRD FLEW DOWN AND PECKED AT A WARTY TOAD

Ask the children if the order in which the word fragments were put together matters very much. For example, what if you were to change the order of the sentence fragments? **Display** this by exchanging the “A WARTY TOAD” fragment with the “A PRETTY BLUE BIRD” fragment so that the sentence now reads:

A WARTY TOAD FLEW DOWN AND PECKED AT A PRETTY BLUE BIRD

Point out that by changing the order of the words, we come to a totally different meaning to the sentence—and one that is very silly! Explain that this illustration can help us understand how we go about looking for clues in the Bible.

Display your Bible again and comment: *Not only is it important to have the WHOLE Bible for solving the mystery; it's also important that we put the clues from the Bible in their CORRECT ORDER.*

Emphasize that the Bible is not simply a collection of verses, people, and events tossed together at random. The Bible has a certain order to it. The Bible was written in a way that allows us to look for clues and put them in the right order.

Display Bible Clue Card #1. Tell the children that this card has a special clue on it that will help us know where in the Bible to begin to look for clues to solve the questions: “Who killed Jesus, and why did He die on a cross?”

Choose a child to come to the front. Hold the card up and ask him to read the clue printed on it. (Note: Do not allow him to hold and really study the card. It is important

that he not have a close enough look at it until you have placed it into the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual.) After he looks confused or comments that he can't read the card, ask the children what might be wrong. How will he be able to read the clue on the card? Explain to the children that you have a verse that might help solve the problem. [Have the child return to his seat.]

Have the children do a **Sword Drill** with **Luke 24:26-27**:

“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Note: For an explanation of Sword Drills, see Appendix III.

Who is asking the question in verse 26? Go back and look at verse 15 of chapter 24 for the answer. [Jesus was asking the question.]

Remind the children that in our first lesson we learned of the two men who were walking together along a road near Jerusalem soon after Jesus' death. As they were walking, Jesus joined them, but they didn't recognize that He was Jesus.

Why would it be shocking to them that it was Jesus talking to them? [He was supposed to be dead.]

Explain that Jesus spoke these words to the two men after His resurrection—after He had risen from the dead! Jesus knew that they were confused by His death. Jesus knew that they didn't understand who did it and why. So He explained it—interpreted it—to them. He revealed to them the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages.

Ask: According to verse 27, how did Jesus go about explaining it to them? Where in the Bible story did He begin? [Beginning with Moses and the Prophets.]

Point out that “Moses and the Prophets” refer to the men God used to write down His words in the Old Testament. Jesus was explaining to the two men that the Old Testament Scripture was filled with clues about Himself and His death on the cross. Jesus explained to them what the clues were, where they were found, and how they explained the mystery of His death on the cross.

Jesus is the key to understanding the Old Testament and its clues. We need Jesus to understand what the clues are and what they mean.

Display the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual.

Quickly recall the four themes presented so far:

- We need the WHOLE Bible to understand the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross.
- The Bible contains the CLUES to the mystery.
- We need put the clues from the Bible in the CORRECT ORDER—beginning with the Old Testament.
- JESUS IS THE KEY to understanding the clues.

Ask: *Exactly where in the Old Testament should we start looking for the clues?*

Explain that the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual can help us with this. Point to the red part that reads "Jesus." Have a child take **Bible Clue Card #1** and the magnifying glass (to help with reading the clue). Have the child slide the card into the slit above the red portion until the words become visible through the red paper:

Start at Genesis 1:1

Ask if any of the children can recite Genesis 1:1 from memory, and then have the children turn to Genesis 1:1 in their Bibles and read the passage together:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Tape the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual on a wall in the front of the classroom (at a height that will be easily accessible to the children).

Ask: *What does the very first verse of the Bible tell us?*

Activity: Use a white-board or large piece of paper and make the following headings:

Who? What?

Ask: *Who is the only Person mentioned in this verse? [God.] Is anyone else mentioned? Does it say "gods"? No! There is only one God. The story of the Bible begins by telling us something very important—the Bible is about the one God. It is His story. Solving the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross begins with God. (Write "One God" under the Who? heading.)*

Ask: *According to this verse, what did God do? [He created the heavens and the earth.] Who alone created the heavens and the earth? One God did. There is only this one God, and He alone is the Creator of everything. (Under the What? heading write "Created.")*

Ask: *If this one God is the Creator of everything, then He alone was never created—He alone had no beginning. There is a special word that is used to describe this. What is it? [God is eternal.] (Write "Eternal" under the Who? heading.)*

Ask: *When did God create everything?* [In the beginning.]

Point out that the very first sentence of the Bible provides us with the starting point of our mystery: God! The mystery of Jesus' death on the cross begins with the one eternal Creator God. **Display** the **ONE ETERNAL CREATOR GOD** visual.

The first verse of the Bible is very important for solving the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross. But we have a long way to go yet, and many clues to discover from the Bible!

Briefly summarize by stating the main themes presented:

- We need the WHOLE Bible to understand the mystery of what happened on the cross.
- The Bible contains the CLUES to solve the mystery.
- We need to put the clues from the Bible in the CORRECT ORDER—beginning with the Old Testament.
- JESUS IS THE KEY to understanding the clues
- The solution to the mystery begins in Genesis 1:1 with the one eternal Creator God.

Application

- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 2 in their workbooks. Read the comments and instructions that are written in the notebook section at the bottom of the page. Have them fill in the missing words on the three blank lines. What do these three words tell us about God? What does the word “eternal” mean? Have the children read **Psalms 90:2**. [Eternal means God has no beginning or end.] Is this also true of the things He created? Why not? As we read through the story of the Bible, from beginning to end, why is it important to know that God is eternal? Is the story of the Bible about someone who lived a long time ago but is now dead or will be dead in the future? How does this matter for your own life? How do you think that this might help us to solve the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross?
- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children look at the right hand side of the page. Instruct the children to use a colored pencil or marker to highlight the “shadow” words “key” and “Jesus.” How is Jesus the key to understanding the Bible (especially the Old Testament)? If available, show the children a locked container. Ask them if they know what's inside—it's a mystery that you are keeping secret! Give them a few vague hints (you don't want them to be able to guess what is inside). What would they need to open the container? A key. Place some keys on the table and have them try to open

the lock. Next, show them the key you have. Unlock the box to reveal what is inside. How can this illustration help us to understand that Jesus is the key to understanding the Scriptures?

- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children look up the verses listed at the bottom of the right-hand side of their workbook page. Have the children write in the missing words from each verse. What does **Hebrews 1:1-2** tell us about Jesus? What part of the verse tells us that Jesus is the key to understanding the Bible? Next, have the children fill in the missing words to **Luke 24:27**. How does this verse help us in our search for clues in correctly solving the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross?
- Some stories, especially mystery stories, are made-up stories. They are not about real people or real events. Is the Bible a true story? Why should this matter to us? Read and discuss **2 Timothy 3:16** and **2 Peter 1:20-21**. Why do you think God wanted the story of the Bible written down and passed on from generation to generation?
- Read **Hebrews 11:3**. What do the words, *by faith*, mean? (Read 11:1 to help.) *Do you have the faith that makes you sure that God created the whole world? Is it still hard for you to understand? Can you believe something to be true even though you can't fully understand it? Is it hard for you to understand that God, and God alone, had no beginning? Can you still trust that it is true even though you can't fully understand it? Have you ever been in a situation where someone tried to tell you that the world wasn't created by God? How did you respond? Can you depend on the Bible, or should you trust other ideas that people may have?* Read and discuss **1 Corinthians 2:13-14**. *Would you say that you are more like the "natural" person or are you more like the "spiritual" person? What makes the difference?*

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