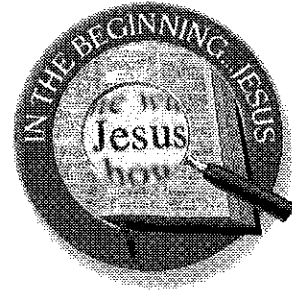


In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 38 The Mystery Is Solved!

Themes:

- Jesus came to establish a new covenant between God and His sinful people.
- The new covenant promises deliverance from sin and death because of what Jesus has accomplished.
- The new covenant is everlasting and has been made official by the shed blood of Jesus.
- The new covenant is for all people who trust in Jesus alone for their salvation.

Scripture:

2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 26:28; Romans 8:1-2; Galatians 3:23-24;
John 3:14-15; Isaiah 53:10.

Memory Verse:

John 1:18 (and review verses 1-17)

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
 - WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHO? WHY? (from Lesson 1).
 - BLUE, YELLOW, GREEN, RED A-B, ORANGE, and WHITE PUZZLE PIECES—Make a copy of each visual on the corresponding color of construction paper. Or, color the border of each piece using a corresponding color of marker. Then, before class hide the pieces (except Red B—the teacher should keep this piece) in the classroom. Make them easy for the children to find in just a couple of minutes.
 - GOD—MAN visual (from previous lessons).
 - BLOOD OF THE COVENANT.
 - JESUS and SINNER.
 - 8 CHECK MARKS.
- A partially completed puzzle (e.g., the border only) and the box cover showing the completed picture.
- PUZZLE TEMPLATE—Use a 10" x 26" piece of poster paper. On the back side write: The Bronze Serpent.

- Tape.
- Dog leash.
- 2 adult-sized shirts: 1 dirty shirt and 1 newer, clean shirt (preferably a bright color)—Place a self-adhesive nametag labeled “SIN” on the dirty shirt and another self-adhesive nametag labeled “RIGHTEOUSNESS” on the clean shirt.

Optional Visuals for Application:

- \$1 coupons for each child (see Resource Packet) and a sealed empty envelope and a piece of candy or other small treat or prize for each child.
- Set of **PICTURE CLUE CARDS** (available on the CD that comes with the Resource Packet).

Lesson

Display the partially completed puzzle (but not the box cover yet). Ask the children if they can guess what picture is being formed by the puzzle pieces. Then, show the box cover so they can see what the completed puzzle looks like. Were the children correct? Point out that if you didn’t have the picture to look at ahead of time, it would be very difficult to know what picture the pieces will form.

Display a set of picture clue cards. We also have “pieces” of a picture. Point to the *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster. Remind the children that in our very first lesson we had a puzzle or mystery to solve—the mystery of Jesus’ death on the cross.

Display WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHY? Remind the children that at the time of Jesus’ death, the people knew the answers to three of these questions: *What happened?* Jesus died on a cross. *Where did it happen?* Just outside the city of Jerusalem. *When did it happen?* During the Jewish Passover celebration. But what remained a mystery was: *Why* did it happen, and *who* did it? To find the answers to these questions we went back to the beginning of the story of the Bible in Genesis. We went searching for clues in the Old Testament—clues God had placed there, all pointing to the coming of Jesus and His death on the cross.

Display PUZZLE TEMPLATE. Tell the children there are pieces to complete this puzzle hidden in the room. When all of the pieces are found and put together correctly, the puzzle will show us how Jesus fulfilled nine more clues. These nine clues will also give us the solution to the mystery of Jesus’ death on the cross. Tell the children that if they find a puzzle piece, they should sit down with that piece and let the other children continue looking. **[Note:** Depending on the size of your class, some children may need to find more than one piece.] Give the signal to begin looking for puzzle pieces. After all have been found, have the children return to their seats with the puzzle pieces.

Have children with the BLUE pieces come to the front and tape them in their correct

places (beginning at the very top of the template) to reveal: **THE NEW COVENANT.**

*The title of our puzzle is **THE NEW COVENANT**. What kind of covenant is it? Why would there be a need for a new covenant?*

Point to the torn **COVENANT ARROW** on the **GOD—MAN** visual and ask: *whom had God made this covenant with? [The people of Israel.] Was there a problem with this covenant? [God's people kept breaking it.] Did God know His people would keep breaking it? [Yes.] Then why did He make this covenant with Israel? What was the purpose?*

Display a dog leash. Point out that a leash can have two different purposes. For example, what if your dog saw a squirrel running on the other side of a busy road? What would you use the leash for? [To restrain your dog.] What if your dog was really thirsty after a walk and needed a drink? You know that around the corner there is a drinking fountain. What would you use the leash for? [To lead your dog to water.]

Point out that the old covenant was something like this. It was meant to “restrain” God’s people from sin, but more importantly, it was given to lead God’s people to something much better—a new covenant (**Galatians 3:23-24**). What is this new covenant agreement?

Have the children with the **YELLOW** pieces come to the front and tape them directly under the blue pieces on the template to reveal: **GOD MADE A WAY TO COVER THE SIN OF HIS PEOPLE.**

In the new covenant God made a perfect covering for His sinful people. This covering was not made from animal skins or the blood of animals. This special covering forgives sin completely and is able to make God’s people holy and righteous. What is this special covering?

Have the children with the **GREEN** pieces come to the front and tape them directly under the yellow pieces on the template to reveal: **GOD PROVIDED THE PERFECT LAMB TO BE SACRIFICED—JESUS.**

How did the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, make a perfect covering for sinners?

Have the children with the **RED A** pieces come to the front and tape them directly under the green pieces on the template to reveal: **2 CORINTHIANS 5:21.**

Have the children turn to **2 Corinthians 5:21**:

For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

According to this verse, who is the "Him" who knew no sin? [Jesus.] Who made Jesus to "be sin"? [God.] Why did He do this? What does this mean?

Illustration: Choose two children to come to the front. Give the first child the dirty shirt labeled **SIN** to wear. Give the second child the clean shirt labeled **RIGHTEOUSNESS** to wear. *Which child's clothing would best represent what Jesus is like?* [The righteous one.] Give this child **JESUS** to hold. *Which one would best represent what we are like?* [The sin one.] Give this child **SINNER** to hold. *According to the verse we read, what did God do for sinners?*

Take the **SIN** shirt off of the first child. Take the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** shirt off of the second child and place the **SIN** shirt on him. Finally, take the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** shirt and place it on the first child. (In other words, the two children switch shirts.)

Explain that God made a perfect covering for His sinful people. God put Jesus' righteousness on His sinful people, and God put their sin on Jesus.

But sin must be punished with death. That is the right thing for God to do. So what did God do next?

Display **RED B** piece and tape it over the red puzzle pieces on the template: **GOD MADE JESUS TO BE SIN FOR US. THEN GOD PUT TO DEATH HIS ONE SON WHOM HE LOVED.**

Who killed Jesus? [God did!]

Point to the ***In the Beginning...Jesus*** poster. In our very first lesson, we went through a list of possible suspects—people who might have killed Jesus. Are these people clearly visible on our poster anymore? Why not? [As clues were revealed, the pictures of the different people have been "broken up."] Point out that the soldiers, the crowds, Pilate, Judas, Peter, and all the others were guilty. But they were not guilty of Jesus' death because **THEY** did it, but because **GOD DID IT** on behalf of sinners (**Isaiah 53:10a**). **THIS IS OKAY...**Only God had the power or the authority to actually put His Son to death.*

The death of Jesus had been God's plan from the very beginning! And because Jesus willingly went to the cross and because God willingly put Jesus to death—something very important happened. What was it?

***Note:** For more information on this important biblical truth, see pages 11-17 in the book *Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die* by John Piper (published by Crossway, copyright 2006).

Have the children holding the **ORANGE** pieces come up and tape them directly under the red pieces on the template to reveal: **BY HIS DEATH, JESUS HEALS HIS SINFUL**

PEOPLE AND DELIVERS THEM FROM DEATH INTO ETERNAL LIFE.

Have the children turn to **Romans 8:1-2**:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

When Jesus died on the cross, His shed blood completely forgave His people's sin. Jesus gave His people His own righteousness, making their hearts brand new. In doing this, He finally set His people free from their captivity to sin and the punishment of death. To be set free from sin and death means to be delivered.

Will this new covenant last? Will it become old someday? Can it be broken like the old one?

Have the children with the **WHITE** pieces come up and tape their pieces directly under the orange pieces on the template to reveal: **EVERLASTING COVENANT—MATTHEW 26:28**. Point out that the new covenant Jesus made will last forever and ever. It is an agreement that will never end. How can we be sure it will last forever?

Before, when we talked about God's covenant on Mt. Sinai, we learned that God sealed the covenant to make it official. Do you remember what the old covenant was sealed with? [Blood.] Do you think that there would also be an official seal for the new covenant? Something making it official and everlasting? What might it be?

Tell the children that the answer can be found in **Matthew 26:28**. Have them turn to this passage and read it to themselves. What makes the new covenant official? [Jesus' blood.] **Display** the **BLOOD OF THE COVENANT** piece and tape it over the **Matthew 26:28** piece on the template. For the final puzzle, see the next page.

Tell the children that in putting together this puzzle, we have seen eight more picture clues fulfilled. What are they? [Wait a few moments and see if they can cite the eight picture clues.] Quickly tape the eight **CHECK MARKS** to the poster clues listed below:

- **NEW COVENANT**
- **COVERING FOR SIN**
- **GOD WILL PROVIDE THE LAMB**
- **ONE LOVED SON**
- **HEALER**
- **DELIVERANCE**
- **EVERLASTING COVENANT**
- **BLOOD OF THE COVENANT**

The NEW COVENANT

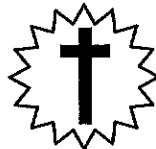
God made a way to
COVER the SIN of His
people.

GOD PROVIDED THE
perfect LAMB to be
sacrificed—Jesus.

God made Jesus to be sin
for us. Then God put to
death His ONE SON
whom He LOVED.

By His death, Jesus HEALS
His sinful people and
DELIVERS them from
death into eternal life.

EVERLASTING
COVENANT !



There is one more important question about this covenant. Whom is this covenant for? The old covenant was with the people of Israel. Is the new covenant just for Israel—the Jewish people?

Turn the finished puzzle over to reveal the words: The Bronze Serpent. Then point to the **BRONZE SERPENT** clue on the poster. *How can this picture clue have anything to do with the new covenant?*

Have the children turn to **John 3:14-15**:

[Jesus said,] “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.”

Why did God command Moses to lift up the bronze serpent? [So the Israelites would look to it and be saved from the deadly bites of the serpents.] Who is the Son of Man? [Jesus.] Who is being lifted up like the bronze serpent was? [Jesus.] Was He lifted up on a pole like the bronze serpent? [No, He was lifted up on a cross.] Whom will He save when He has been lifted up on the cross? [Everyone who believes in Him.]

Emphasize that the new covenant is for everyone who looks to Jesus to be saved from the “sting” of sin and death. The new covenant is for sinners who depend on Jesus alone for the forgiveness of sin. The new covenant is for everyone who believes in Jesus for who He is, all that He has done, and all that He has promised to do.

So who killed Jesus? God did! The death of Jesus on the cross was the

plan of God from the very beginning. Why did God do this and why was Jesus willing to do this? In order to make a new, final, everlasting covenant with His people so they could finally be delivered from sin and death in order that they might love, trust, obey, and enjoy God forever in heaven.

Note: The next lesson will require seeds to be planted several days before the lesson. Please read the Visuals for Lesson section of the next lesson for further instructions.

Application

- Remind the children of the illustration of the two shirts. Which shirt would best represent the condition of our hearts (apart from Jesus)? Which shirt represents what belongs to Jesus? What did Jesus do for sinners on the cross? [He “traded” with sinners and took their sin and punishment as if it was His own, and gave to sinners His righteousness and eternal life.] Read and discuss **2 Corinthians 5:21** and **Romans 6:23**. Why is eternal life through Jesus a gift? Show the children in your group a bag of candy or some type of prize. Explain that in order to get the candy, each child needs a special \$1 coupon (display the coupon). Hand each child an envelope. Explain that each envelope has a coupon equal to the amount of money they have earned toward buying the candy. Have the children open the envelopes. Why is there nothing inside? Because they have not done anything to earn the special coupon. Finally, show them the other \$1 coupons you have. If you give each child a coupon without them earning it, what would it be considered? [A gift.] Is this gift yours? How can it be yours? Read and discuss **John 3:16-18**.
- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 38 in their workbooks. In the notebook section have the children write the missing words for the answers to the questions: Who killed Jesus [God] and why did He do it? [To make a new covenant with His people.] Read and discuss **Romans 8:1-4a**. On the opposite page in the workbooks, have the children fill in the missing words that summarize the new covenant. The answers can be determined by contrasting the five key concepts stated in the old covenant with those in the new covenant. Discuss the differences between the two covenants. Why is the new covenant so much better than the old one? What do the terms “by grace” and “through faith” found on the workbook page mean? Read and discuss **Ephesians 2:4-9**.
- Read **Luke 23:44-46**. What is this curtain? [The veil that separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place.] Who tore the curtain and why? What did God want us to understand by this? Read and discuss **Hebrews 10:19-22**.

- Read **John 19:36a**. Recall that we read this verse in the very first lesson. According to this verse, was Jesus' death on the cross an "accident"? Why not? Who planned it? When did God plan Jesus' death? Was this plan put together after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden? Did God say something like, ["Oh no! They sinned. Now I need to come up with a plan to save them"]? Read and discuss **2 Timothy 1:9**. When is "before the ages began"? Use the illustration of a puzzle again. Point out that before a puzzle is made and cut into pieces, the maker has created the whole picture. Then, each piece is cut to fit perfectly into that picture. Show the children the set of **PICTURE CLUE CARDS**. Explain that before the world ever was created, God already had the "picture" of Jesus on the cross perfectly planned. And, at just the right time, God revealed each clue and then completed His plan in Jesus. How does knowing this help you to better understand what Jesus did on the cross? Did God do it because He was forced into it? Did Jesus do it because He was forced into it? How does it make you feel when someone does something for you because they want to do it instead of being forced into it? Read and discuss **Romans 5:6-11**. What should *your* response be if you have been saved by His love? What should your response be if you are not yet trusting in what Jesus has done? Read **2 Corinthians 6:1-2** and **Romans 2:4**.
- Refer to the clue of the bronze serpent. Remind the children that when God commanded the Israelites to look to the bronze serpent to be healed, there were two responses. What were they? [Belief followed by obedience or disbelief followed by disobedience.] Why would it SEEM foolish to look to a bronze serpent in order to be saved? Read and discuss **1 Corinthians 1:18**. How might the message of the cross seem foolish to people? How do you see the message of the cross? Do you believe Jesus did what the Bible says He did? Do you believe Jesus came to save you? Are you trusting in Him alone to save you? How is this evidenced in your life? Will it change you? In what ways?
- Point out that the story of the Bible is all about God's wonderful plan to save His sinful people through what Jesus has done. It is a story that shows us how great God is! And in this story there is another story—a story about each of us. The Bible is also the story of who we are and what we are like. Why do you think God wants each of us to read, hear, and understand this message? Read and discuss **John 20:31**.

Send Home

- Parent Resource Page