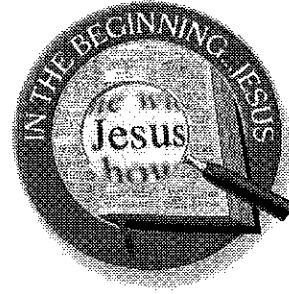


In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 34

Jesus: Perfect Law Keeper

Themes:

- Jesus is fully God and became fully human.
- Jesus was tempted just like Adam, but did not sin.
- Jesus kept God's holy and righteous commands, succeeding where all other people have failed.
- Jesus was victorious over Satan, fulfilling the Old Testament promises.

Scripture:

Matthew 4:1-11; 5:17; Romans 5:12; Genesis 3:15

Memory Verse:

John 1:14b (and review verses 1-14a)

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
 - GOD—MAN visual (from previous lessons).
 - COVENANT—Make a copy for each student and one for the teacher.
 - 3 CHECK MARKS.
 - JESUS: PERFECT LAW KEEPER.
- A small prize (e.g., candy or a small toy that would appeal to either boys or girls).
- Two large balls (e.g., soccer balls or basketballs).
- White board or large piece of paper and markers.

Lesson

Tell the children you are going to have a contest between the girls and the boys. Choose a boy and a girl to come to the front. Explain that these two contestants will represent their corresponding team. If the girl wins, all the girls will get a prize to share, and if the boy wins, all the boys will get the prize to share. **Display** the prize. Then give each child a ball. Explain to them that when you give the signal to begin they must take the ball and balance it on tip of their nose for 10 seconds. They may not use their hands to balance the ball, and they may not spin the ball. The ball cannot rest on their foreheads. If the ball falls down, they may pick it up and try again. The first child able to do this within 30 seconds will be the winner. Give the signal to begin. When 30 seconds are up, ask the children why neither one of them succeeded. Suggest that maybe someone else from each team could succeed and win the contest. Quickly choose two more children to attempt the contest. Why did they fail also?

Because your team "representatives" failed, you, too, failed to win the prize. And if each of you tried this contest, you would fail, too.

How does it make you feel to know you can't win the contest and the prize?

Point out that as frustrating and disappointing as this might be, there is a much bigger contest we each have failed to win and can never win no matter how hard we try. One of the reasons we can't win is because our first "team member" who represented us failed. What is this contest? Who is this "team member" you are talking about?

Using a white board and marker, make two columns. Title one "ADAM" and leave the other untitled for now.

Who was Adam? [The very first man God created.] Adam was God's image bearer and, as the very first man, he represented the whole human race—our "team." Where did God place Adam after he was created? [In the garden of Eden.] Write "Garden" underneath ADAM on the whiteboard. Was this garden filled with good things to eat? [Yes.] Write "Plenty to eat" underneath "Garden." Was there anything Adam was not allowed to eat? [Yes.] What was it? [Fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.] Who gave this command to Adam? [God.] Does this seem like a hard command to obey? Why not? However, what creature came to tempt Adam to disobey this command? [The serpent (the devil).] Write, "Tempter=the devil" underneath "Plenty to eat."

Explain that the serpent (the devil) was making Adam's obedience to God into a type of contest or challenge. Adam would lose the contest if the serpent could persuade him to disobey the true and right command of God. How many times was Adam tempted? [One time.] As we have learned from the book of Genesis, did Adam succeed in this

contest against the tempter? [He failed.] Write "Adam failed" underneath "Tempter=the devil" in the ADAM column.

Was Adam the only loser in this contest?

Point to the torn **COVENANT** on the **GOD—MAN** visual. Ask the children if they remember whom God made this covenant with. [Israel.] Were the people of Israel descendants of Adam? [Yes.] They were all part of Adam's "team." Were they able to succeed in keeping God's commands? [No, they failed also.] Write the words "Israel failed" under the words "Adam failed." Was anyone else a loser?

Pass out a copy of the **COVENANT** to each child and keep a copy for yourself. Hold up your copy and ask:

What about you? Because you are a descendant of Adam, whose "team" are you a part of? And if you were to take the challenge, would you succeed? When you have been tempted, have you ALWAYS kept God's commands? Or, have you failed just like Adam and just like Israel? (Tear your copy down the middle.) What do each of you also need to do? (Instruct them to tear their visuals.)

Was this a problem for Adam? Was this a problem for Israel? Is this a problem for you?

Have a **Sword Drill** with **Romans 5:12**:

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

What does this verse mean? What is it telling us about ourselves?

Explain that not only did Adam and Israel fail, all men—all people—failed. (Write "All people failed" under the words "Israel failed.") Failure to keep God's holy, righteous, and good commands is sin. What is the consequence of sin? DEATH (write "Death" under the words "All people failed").

Point to **CAPTIVES** on the **GOD—MAN** visual. Remind the children that God's people had a problem that couldn't be solved by simply having a temple, or a throne, or a king, or land. They were held captive by sin. Even great men like Abraham, Moses, and King David failed in the challenge—they were sinners, too.

However, there was another contestant who stepped in to take on this challenge. Point to the second column, which does not yet have a title.

Have the children turn to **Matthew 4:1-11**:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But He answered, "It is written,

'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down, for it is written,

'He will command His angels concerning You,

and

'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written,

'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.'"

Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him.

Title the second column "JESUS" and ask the following questions:

*Who was Jesus? (Point to the signs on the poster: **JESUS: SON OF GOD, JESUS: SON OF MAN.**) Was Jesus in a garden like Adam had been? [No, He was in the wilderness.] (Write "Wilderness" under JESUS on the white board.) How would the wilderness be different from a garden? Did Jesus have good things to eat? [No. Jesus had been without food for 40 days and 40 nights.] (Write "Nothing to eat" underneath "Wilderness.") If you were really, really hungry, would you have a strong desire to eat some food? But who was trying to persuade Jesus to do*

this? [The devil—the same one who had tempted Adam.] (Write, “Tempter=the devil” under “Nothing to eat” in the JESUS column.)

Explain that the devil was once again making obedience to God into a type of contest or challenge. This time, instead of tempting Adam, he was tempting Jesus. Jesus would lose the contest if the devil could persuade Jesus’ to obey his words instead of His Father’s word.

How many times did the devil tempt Jesus to try to make Him sin? [Three times.] Did Jesus win or lose the first contest? [He won.] Did Jesus win or lose the second contest? [He won.] Did Jesus win or lose the third contest? [He won.] Every time the devil challenged Jesus, Jesus won. (Write “Jesus succeeded” under “Tempter=the devil” in the JESUS column.)

Emphasize that Adam and Jesus each had a challenge. A challenge against temptation, the devil, and sin. Who had the more difficult challenge, the man who only had to keep himself from eating one kind of fruit in a garden filled with plenty, or the very hungry Man who had nothing to eat? The man who was only tempted once, or the Man who was tempted three times?

Was this all that Jesus had to do? Did He just have to obey God and succeed against the devil while He was in the wilderness? Could He just go home after this and take it easy?

Point to the torn **COVENANT** on the **GOD—MAN** visual again and ask:

What about God’s holy, righteous, and good laws? Was Jesus an Israelite? Was He required to keep the covenant God had made to Israel at Mt. Sinai? Yes! Was Jesus able to succeed when the rest of Israel had failed?

Have the children turn to **Matthew 5:17**:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

What does it mean that Jesus came to fulfill the law? [He came to obey it. He was perfectly righteous, holy, and good.]

Point out that we had a clue about this covenant, which included the Ten Commandments. What is it? [**GOD’S HOLY LAW.**] Tape a **CHECK MARK** on the picture clue: **GOD’S HOLY LAW**. Explain that unlike Israel, Jesus was a perfect law keeper and perfect covenant keeper.

Emphasize again that “Jesus succeeded” (write the words underneath the JESUS

column again) where all other people failed. **Display JESUS: PERFECT LAW KEEPER** and tape it on the poster over **JESUS: SON OF GOD**.

Because Jesus was a perfect law keeper and never sinned, is there anything He would have earned for His perfect obedience? Did we have a clue on our poster that had something to do with what is gained by perfect obedience?

Hold up a **CHECK MARK** and choose a child to tape it on the picture clue: **PERFECT OBEDIENCE—LIFE**. Write the word "LIFE" under the JESUS column.

The final columns should look like this:

ADAM	JESUS
Garden	Wilderness
Plenty to eat	Nothing to eat
Tempter = the devil	Tempter = the devil
Adam failed	Jesus succeeded
Israel failed	Jesus succeeded
All people failed	Jesus succeeded
DEATH	LIFE

Remind the children that Jesus came to earth as a real person—just like us. And just as the first man was tempted to sin, Jesus was also tempted. But where Adam failed and sinned, Jesus succeeded and won. Where Israel failed, Jesus succeeded and won. Where you and I failed, Jesus succeeded and won. How was He able to do this? Because, unlike Adam or Israel or us, Jesus is the Son of God and fully God. In being perfectly obedient, Jesus also did something else very important. What was it?

I want you to think of another kind of contest for a moment—a wrestling match between two men. In a wrestling match, the winner is the one who can pin down his opponent. The winner is the one who ends up on top.

If we thought of Jesus' contest with the devil, sin, and death as a type of wrestling match, who would have ended up on top? [Jesus.] Have we had a clue that would have shown something like this? A clue that shows Jesus "pinned down" the devil and defeated him, along with sin and death?

Give the final **CHECK MARK** to a child and have him tape it on the picture clue: **HEEL AND SERPENT'S HEAD**.

*Do you remember the circumstances in which God gave this clue? [After Adam and Eve had sinned (**Genesis 3:15**).] After God told the serpent and Adam and Eve what their punishment would be for their sin, He made a promise—a promise that some day the offspring of Eve would bruise or crush the head of the serpent. Jesus is the offspring of Eve who came to do this. He was the fulfillment of that promise. How is this good news for sinners? [Allow the children to respond.]*

Application

- Review the contest from the start of this lesson (balancing the ball). *What was the outcome of Adam's contest? He sinned, and death entered the world. Was Adam the only one impacted by this? Did you think you could have done a better job than Adam? Why or why not? Read **Romans 3:23**. How is this made evident in your own life? How is **Romans 5:12** proven to be true in the world?*
- *Why did Adam's failure become our failure? How did Adam's sin become our sin? Ask the children if they know what the word "inherit" means. If possible, show the children a picture of a parent and child who look alike. Explain that children inherit things from their birth parents, such as shape of nose and ears, kind of smile, eye color, etc. Explain that when Adam and Eve failed and sinned against God, their hearts became darkened—meaning they were sinful. (See **Romans 1:21**.) A darkened heart is a heart that no longer sees, understands, and treasures God as it should. It can't obey God as it should, and it doesn't want to. (See **Romans 8:7**.) When Adam and Eve had children, their children inherited that darkened heart. (See **Romans 5:19a**.) Can people—all of us—ever win against the devil with a sinful heart? Can we ever keep God's perfect commands with a sinful heart? Does God know and understand our problem? Is there any way Jesus' success can help us? Read **Romans 5:19**. How do you think that could happen?*
- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 34 in their workbooks. In the notebook space, have the children write the three clues Jesus fulfilled. Review the contest between the devil and Jesus from **Matthew 4:1-11**. Who won the contest? Have the children fill in their workbook page. What did Jesus use as a "weapon" to defeat the devil? [God's Word.] Have you ever used God's Word to keep you from sinning in a certain situation? Can you give an example of a verse that has helped you? Are you ALWAYS successful? Why not? Is there a way that Jesus' success can also cause you to succeed? (Review the example of a pinch hitter in a baseball game from Lesson 32.) For example, what if you are on a team in which only one of the players is able to score runs and goals? Are you still a winner if your team wins, but you personally fail to score even once? When the first

place ribbons are handed out, will you get one along with the other team members? What was the “prize” Jesus earned because of His perfect obedience to God? [Eternal life.] How does a person become part of Jesus’ winning “team”? Read and discuss **Ephesians 2:4-9**. What does God do for those on Jesus’ “team”? Is the prize something we have earned? What is “grace”? [Grace is God’s kindness to undeserving sinners. Grace is a gift.] What is “faith”? [Trusting in and depending on the work Jesus has done.]

- ❑ Review the clue from **Genesis 3:15** of the heel and the serpent’s head. Why is there a picture of a human heel in the clue? Why not an angel’s heel? Remind the children that this clue was hidden within the curse that God gave to Adam and Eve after their act of disobedience. Even back in the garden, God had already planned to send Someone—who was like Adam—to defeat the devil. Read **Hebrews 2:14-15**. How did Jesus defeat the works of the devil?
- ❑ Once a person trusts in Christ and is on His winning “team” is his contest against sin over? Is he still tempted to sin again? Why? [Give the example of Paul’s struggle from **Romans 7:15-20**.] Who can help the Christian fight against sin? Read **Hebrews 2:16-18**. How can Jesus help us in our fight against sin? Has Jesus given Christians any “tools” to use? Choose children to read **John 14:15-17** and **Ephesians 6:13-18** for some examples.

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