

Lesson 2

Jesus' Passion



The Son of Man before the Chief Priests

Early World	Patriarchs	Egypt & Exodus	Desert Wanderings	Conquest & Judges	Royal Kingdom	Divided Kingdom	Exile	Return	Maccabean Revolt	Messianic Fulfillment	The Church

Introduction

Following Jesus' arrest, his enemies move quickly to eliminate him. After he's questioned by the chief priests and elders of the Temple at Jerusalem, Jesus is taken to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Pilate, trying to avoid a political uprising, sends Jesus to Herod—not actually a Jew himself but the functioning regional king of the Jews. Everyone who interviews Jesus has one question in mind: Who is this Galilean? The movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, depicts Satan in the Garden of Gethsemane exhibiting great interest in Jesus' true identity, asking: "Who is your father?" and "Who are you?" Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod are just as interested in Jesus' identity. Is he the long-awaited "Messiah," the "Son of God" and "King of the Jews"? Throughout the New Testament, the title that Jesus most frequently uses to refer to himself—and one that no one else uses—is "Son of man," an obvious reference to Old Testament messianic prophecies of a mysterious figure closely identified with God himself (*Dan 7:13-14*). It's Jesus' claim to this divine title that causes the Jewish leaders to condemn him to death for blasphemy.

Mark 14:53-65

14⁵³ And they led Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes were assembled. ⁵⁴ And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. ⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and the whole council sought testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. ⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against him, and their witness did not agree. ⁵⁷ And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, ⁵⁸ "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" ⁵⁹ Yet not even so did their testimony agree. ⁶⁰ And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" ⁶¹ But he was silent and made no answer. **Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"** ⁶² And Jesus said, "I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." ⁶³ And the high priest tore his mantle, and said, "Why do we still need witnesses?" ⁶⁴ You have

Mark 14:53-65

heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. ⁶⁵And some began to spit on him and to cover his face, and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards received him with blows.

[Please Note: One of the best ways to meditate on God’s Word is through memorization. A suggested memory verse is always highlighted in the Scripture text, or you may choose a verse of your own.]

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Matthew 27:3-7

27³When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, ⁴saying, “I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” ⁵And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. ⁶But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” ⁷So they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in.

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John 18:12-38

18¹²So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him. ¹³First they led him to Annas; for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. ¹⁴It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

¹⁵Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. As this disciple was known to the high priest, he entered the court of the high priest along with Jesus, ¹⁶while Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the maid who kept the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The maid who kept the door said to Peter, “Are not you also one of this man’s disciples?” He said, “I am not.” ¹⁸Now the servants and officers had made a

charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves; Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

¹⁹The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said.” ²²When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” ²³Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” ²⁴Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, “Are not you also one of his disciples?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” ²⁷Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed.

²⁸Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was early. They themselves did not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusations do you bring against this man?” ³⁰They answered him, “If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over.” ³¹Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves, and judge him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put a man to death.” ³²This was to fulfil the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die.

³³Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” ³⁵Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?” ³⁶Jesus answered “My kingship is not of this world, if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.” ³⁷Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.” ³⁸Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

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Luke 23:1-12

23 ¹Then the whole company of them arose, and brought him before Pilate. ²And they began to accuse him, saying “We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king.” ³And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.” ⁴And Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, “I find no crime in this man.” ⁵But they were urgent, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching them throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.”

⁶When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷And when he learned that he belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. ⁸When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. ⁹So he questioned him at some length; but he made no answer. ¹⁰The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then, arraying him in gorgeous apparel, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹²And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

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Questions for Reflection and Study

It’s best to read the biblical texts and *Points to Ponder* before responding to the questions. To aid in discussion, please note Scripture verses where you find your responses.

‘Are You the Christ?’

Mark 14:53-65

1. In Mark 14:57-58, what is the testimony of the false witness against Jesus, and how do they distort Jesus’ words (see *Jn* 2:18-19)? What was Jesus really talking about (see *Jn* 2:20-22)?
2. **Reflection:** False witnesses took Jesus’ words and twisted them. What are some examples of ways that our contemporary culture distorts Jesus’ teachings in order to discredit Christianity? How should Christians respond to distortions of the truth about our faith?

3. **Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, “I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”** Throughout most of his questioning by the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus remains silent. It’s only when directly asked if he’s the Christ (the Messiah), that Jesus replies. How is Jesus’ response in Mark 14:61b-62 (our suggested memory verses) tied to the name of God revealed to Moses at the burning bush, and how is it tied to Old Testament messianic prophecy (see *Ex* 3:13-14 and *Dan* 7:13-14)?

4. In the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, the final charge brought against Jesus by Caiaphas and the chief priests and elders is blasphemy. How does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* define blasphemy, and how is blasphemy directly opposed to the second commandment (see *CCC* 2148)? Under religious laws of the Old Testament, what is the penalty for blasphemy (see *Lev* 24:16)?

Peter Denies Jesus Three Times

John 18:15-27

5. Just as Jesus predicted in John 13:36-38, Peter denies him three times. In the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, Peter is depicted falling at the Blessed Virgin Mary’s feet and crying out: “I have denied him, Mother.” How does this scene, which doesn’t occur in Scripture, emphasize Mary’s role in intercessory prayer (see *CCC* 975)?

Judas Returns the Blood Money

Matthew 27:3-7

6. Matthew records that Judas is filled with remorse because he betrayed Jesus, that Judas hangs himself, and that the Jewish religious leaders use the returned money to purchase the Field of Blood. How does this fulfill Old Testament prophecy (see *Mt* 27:9-10, *Jer* 18:1-11, and *Jer* 32:6-15)?

Jesus' Passion 2 Questions for Reflection and Study

7. **Reflection:** Judas betrayed Jesus, and Peter denied Jesus. Judas was remorseful and killed himself; Peter was repentant and accepted forgiveness. How do contemporary Christians betray or deny Jesus? What's the difference between betrayal and denial?

The King of the Jews

John 18:12-38 and Luke 23:1-12

8. In John 18:29, Pilate asks the Jewish religious leaders what accusation they're bringing against Jesus. What response do the Jewish leaders make to Pilate in John 18:30? What are the three charges that the Jewish religious leaders make against Jesus in Luke 23:2?
9. Why does Pilate want the Jews to judge Jesus by their own laws rather than to have Jesus judged by Roman law? In John 18:32, how does the Jewish religious leaders' inability to put anyone to death under the law fulfill what Jesus prophesied about the manner in which he would die (see *Mt* 20:19)?
10. In John 18:34, after Pilate asks if Jesus is King of the Jews, Jesus responds with a question of his own. What does Jesus ask Pilate, and why does he ask this particular question? In John 18:36, what does Jesus mean by saying that his kingship is not of this world (see *CCC* 671)?

Voices of the Saints

Lord, you drew all things to yourself so that the devotion of all peoples everywhere might celebrate, in a sacrament made perfect and visible, what was carried out in the one Temple of Judea under obscure foreshadowings. Now there is a more distinguished order of Levites, a greater dignity for the rank of elders, a more sacred anointing for the priesthood, because your Cross is the source of all blessings, the cause of all graces.

—**St. Leo the Great, pope**

Opportunities for Additional Study

Points to Ponder

Mark 14:53-65; Matthew 27:3-7; John 18:12-38; Luke 23:1-12

Jesus' Enemies

Scripture is clear that the council of Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem was behind the plot to arrest and kill Jesus. Called the Sanhedrin, the council consisted of the chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people, and it was led by the high priest, Caiaphas. The Gospels indicate that Caiaphas played a pivotal role in convincing the council to condemn Jesus to death. Matthew writes that “the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and took counsel together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him” (*Mt* 26:3-4). John’s Gospel records Caiaphas’ words to the chief priests and Pharisees about Jesus: “You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish” (*Jn* 11:49-50).

These passages don’t justify anti-Semitism, however. The teaching of the Church concerning the question: “Who is responsible for the death of Jesus?” is unequivocal. Although some Christians hold the notion that the Jews collectively are responsible for the death of Jesus and that they alone are to blame, this idea was repudiated by the Second Vatican Council. *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christians) clearly teaches: “Neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during [Jesus’] Passion.”

Paragraph 598 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains in no uncertain terms who’s really responsible for Jesus’ death: “. . . the Church has never forgotten that ‘sinners were the authors and the ministers of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured.’ Taking into account the fact that our sins affect Christ himself, the Church does not hesitate to impute to Christians the gravest responsibility for the torments inflicted upon Jesus.” The same paragraph includes this quote from the *Roman Catechism* of 1566: “We must regard as guilty all those who continue to relapse into their sins. Since our sins made the Lord Christ suffer the torment of the cross, those who plunge themselves into disorders and crimes crucify the Son of God anew in their hearts. . . .”

The Charge of Blasphemy

The members of the Sanhedrin have plenty of motives for wanting to do away with Jesus. Although not a priest, scribe, or elder, Jesus has been performing incredible miracles. He speaks out openly against hypocrisy, especially the hypocrisy of religious leaders. He repeatedly heals people on the sabbath, something that seems to fly in the face of the Pharisees’ understanding of the Law. Jesus’ popularity threatens the spiritual leaders of his time.

But the thing that the Jewish religious leaders find impossible to accept is Jesus’ insistence that he is the Son of God. Jesus claims the ability to forgive sins (*Mk* 2:5). He claims the divine name of “I AM” revealed by God to Moses at the burning bush (*Ex* 3:14). He accepts such messianic

Jesus' Passion Lesson 2 Points to Ponder

titles as “Son of David” and “Holy One of God” (*Lk* 18:38-39 and *Jn* 6:69). In the eyes of the Jewish religious leaders, this is unthinkable. Mark 14:62 records that when Jesus is asked if he’s the Messiah, he states definitively that he’s indeed the “Son of man,” and he deliberately applies the divine name of God to himself: “I am; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” Caiaphas tears his own clothing, declaring that Jesus has blasphemed. The irony is that the charge of blasphemy only applies if Jesus were lying. In fact, Jesus *is* the Son of God, and he’s telling the truth when he claims divinity.

Under Jewish law, the penalty for blasphemy was death (*Lev* 24:16), but because of the Roman occupation of Judea, the Jewish religious leaders are forbidden to exercise the death penalty. This is why Caiaphas and the other chief priests and elders take Jesus before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Only the Romans are permitted to execute criminals.

Mary, Model of Obedience of Faith

In the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, the Blessed Virgin Mary, realizing that Jesus’ suffering has begun, announces, “So be it.” Although these words of Mary’s aren’t found in Scripture, they’re related to her fiat—“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (*Lk* 1:38)—and they emphasize Church teaching regarding Mary’s understanding of Jesus’ role as Savior of the world. Paragraph 969 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect.”

The film repeatedly focuses on Jesus’ close relationship with his mother and on Mary’s reactions to the disturbing events of the Passion. In a haunting scene after Jesus has been imprisoned, the Blessed Virgin Mary walks through the courtyard of the high priest until she senses the presence of her Son and lies down on the pavement immediately above his cell. This event isn’t found in the Bible, but it nevertheless reflects Catholic teaching that Mary’s role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Jesus and flows directly from it. *Lumen Gentium* (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) explains: “This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ’s virginal conception up to his death.”

The Blessed Virgin Mary’s role as intercessor is underscored in the movie when Peter falls at her feet and confesses his denials of Jesus. Although this scene isn’t recorded in Scripture, either, it’s consistent with the Church teaching that it’s acceptable for Christians to appeal to Jesus’ mother when they’ve offended God. The *Solemn Profession of Faith: Credo of the People of God* by Pope Paul V states: “We believe that the Holy Mother of God, the new Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ.”

Judas and His Demons

Although Judas repents after his betrayal of Jesus and returns the 30 pieces of silver to the high priests and elders, this action isn’t enough to banish his demons. Scripture recounts that Judas was so upset by the turn of events after Jesus’ arrest that he hangs himself (*Mt* 27:3-5). But the

demons that appear in the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, don't appear in the pages of the New Testament that describe Judas' death. Purely dramatic representations, they're designed to indicate something of the spiritual torture Judas was undergoing. It's not unreasonable to imagine Satan looking on as Judas hangs himself, although Scripture makes no mention of this.

Portraying something as innocent as young children at play in such a twisted and terrifying manner in the film underscores the way that the consequences of sin can distort human perception of the good, the true, and the beautiful. Such distortion reflects the entrenched selfishness of the contemporary secular world in which a great many people have come to view children as a burden rather than a treasure, a curse rather than a blessing.

Catechism Connection

- CCC 165 teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary, by sharing the darkness of her son's suffering and death, provides Christians with an example of perseverance in faith.
- By giving his life to free humanity from sin, Jesus reveals that he himself bears God's divine name: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will realize that 'I AM'." For more information about God's divine name, see CCC 205-211.
- To learn more about the meaning of the title "Son of man," by which Jesus frequently refers to himself, see CCC 460.
- CCC 585 explains how Jesus' prophesied destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem is distorted by false witnesses during his interrogation at the high priest's house.
- The Church teaches that personal sin of the participants in Jesus' trial is known to God alone. CCC 597 explains why Christians "cannot lay responsibility for the trial on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole."
- CCC 786 teaches that Jesus exercises his kingship by drawing all men to himself through his death and Resurrection.

Rome to Home

Authentic Christian freedom is founded on the acceptance of truth, as Pope John Paul II taught.

Christ reveals, first and foremost, that the frank and open acceptance of truth is the condition for authentic freedom: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (*Jn* 8:32). This is truth which sets one free in the face of worldly power and which gives the strength to endure martyrdom. So it was with Jesus before Pilate: "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (*Jn* 18:37). The true worshipers of God must thus worship him "in spirit and truth" (*Jn* 4:23): In this worship they become free. Worship of God and a relationship with truth are revealed in Jesus Christ as the deepest foundation of freedom.

—*Veritatis Splendor*

Summary

In this lesson, we observed that:

1. False witnesses accuse Jesus before Caiaphas, the chief priests, and elders.
2. When Caiaphas directly asks Jesus if he's the Christ, Jesus' response both identifies him with the messianic "Son of man" prophesied by Daniel and claims for Jesus the divine name of God revealed to Moses.
3. The council of chief priests and elders of the people determine that Jesus is guilty of blasphemy, a crime punishable by death.
4. Because of the Roman occupation of Judea, the Jews are forbidden to execute criminals, so Jesus is taken before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.
5. Peter, standing nearby when Jesus is questioned by the Jewish religious leaders, three times denies his relationship with Jesus—just as Jesus had foretold.
6. Judas, when he sees that Jesus is condemned to death, repents and returns the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders; then he hangs himself.
7. When Pilate questions Jesus about whether Jesus is king of the Jews, Jesus responds that his kingdom isn't of this world.
8. Learning that Jesus is a Galilean, Pilate has him taken to Herod, who's the functioning king of the Jews.

Jesus' Passion: The Story of Redemptive Suffering
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Lesson 2 . . . The Son of Man before the Chief Priests

Jesus' Passion



***Suggested responses to Mark 14:53-65; Matthew 27:3-7;
John 18:12-38; Luke 23:1-12***

Note: Be sure to answer all the questions yourself before reading the suggested responses in order to make the most of this study.

1. In Mark 14:57-58, false witnesses against Jesus claim: “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” In John’s Gospel, after a description of Jesus driving the money-changers out of the Temple, John 2:18-19 records: “The Jews then said to him, ‘What sign have you to show us for doing this?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’” It’s these words of Jesus that the false witnesses distort. John 2:20-22 explains that the Temple leaders misunderstood from the beginning what Jesus was saying: “The Jews then said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?’ But he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.”
2. *Answers to this Reflection question will vary.*
3. In Mark 14:61-62, Caiaphas asks Jesus if he’s the Son of God, and Jesus responds: “I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” By his use of the words “I am,” Jesus is claiming for himself the divine name that Exodus 3:13-14 records God revealed to Moses at the burning bush: “Then Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’” And he said, ‘Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”” In his response to Caiaphas, Jesus also is pointing out a clear parallel to the messianic prophecy recorded in Daniel 7:13-14: “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”
4. Blasphemy, the final charge brought against Jesus by Caiaphas and the chief priests and elders in the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, is defined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as “speech, thought, or action involving contempt for God or the Church, or persons or things dedicated to God.” Paragraph 2148 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that blasphemy is directly opposed to the second commandment against taking the name of God in vain because it “consists in uttering against God—inwardly or outwardly—

Jesus' Passion Lesson 2 Responses

words of hatred, reproach, or defiance; in speaking ill of God; in failing in respect toward him in one's speech; in misusing God's name." Leviticus 24:16 describes the penalty for one who blasphemes: "He who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him; the sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death."

5. The Blessed Virgin Mary's role as intercessor is emphasized in the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, in the scene in which Peter falls at her feet and confesses that he's denied Jesus. Paragraph 975 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that it's acceptable for Christians to appeal to Jesus' mother when they've offended God: "We believe that the Holy Mother of God, the new Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ."
6. In his Gospel, Matthew records that the Field of Blood was purchased from a potter. Matthew 27:9-10 explains: "Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.'" In Jeremiah 18:1-10, the prophet is instructed by God to visit a potter. While there, Jeremiah observes the potter remake a spoiled vessel, and God then likens the house of Israel to clay in his hands, which he can reshape at will if the people persist in doing evil. In Jeremiah 18:11, God announces: "Thus says the LORD, Behold, I am shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings." In Jeremiah 32:6-15, the prophet is instructed by God to buy a field and seal the deed in an earthenware vessel prior to the defeat of Jerusalem that the deed "may last for a long time. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land."
7. *Answers to this Reflection question will vary.*
8. In John 18:30, the Jewish religious leaders dodge Pilate's question and tell the Roman Procurator: "If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over." Luke 23:2 lists these three charges that the Jewish religious authorities make against Jesus—he perverted the Jewish nation, he forbade Jews to pay tribute to Caesar, and he claimed to be the Messiah, the king long awaited by the Jews.
9. Pilate had a record of provoking the Jews and causing political headaches for Caesar. Pilate doesn't want to attract any more negative attention from Rome for fear of being recalled as procurator of Judea. He wants the Jews to handle their problems with Jesus themselves, rather than involving him in what he considers a petty religious dispute. Because the Jewish people are under Roman rule, they're not allowed to execute anyone. In John 18:31, the Jewish religious leaders appeal to Pilate to do this for them. In Matthew 20:19, Jesus prophesies his death by crucifixion. The Jewish religious leaders unwittingly conspire to put Jesus to death exactly in accord with God's plan for salvation.

Jesus' Passion Lesson 2 Responses

10. In John 18:34, Jesus responds to Pilate's question about whether he's King of the Jews by asking Pilate: "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Jesus apparently wishes for Pilate to give more thought to the nature of Jesus' kingship. When Jesus says that his kingship is not of this world, he means that it's a spiritual, not political or earthly kingship. Jesus is talking about the kingdom of heaven. Paragraph 671 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that Jesus' reign, already present in his Church, is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled when there will be realized "new heavens and new earth in which justice dwells."

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Notes