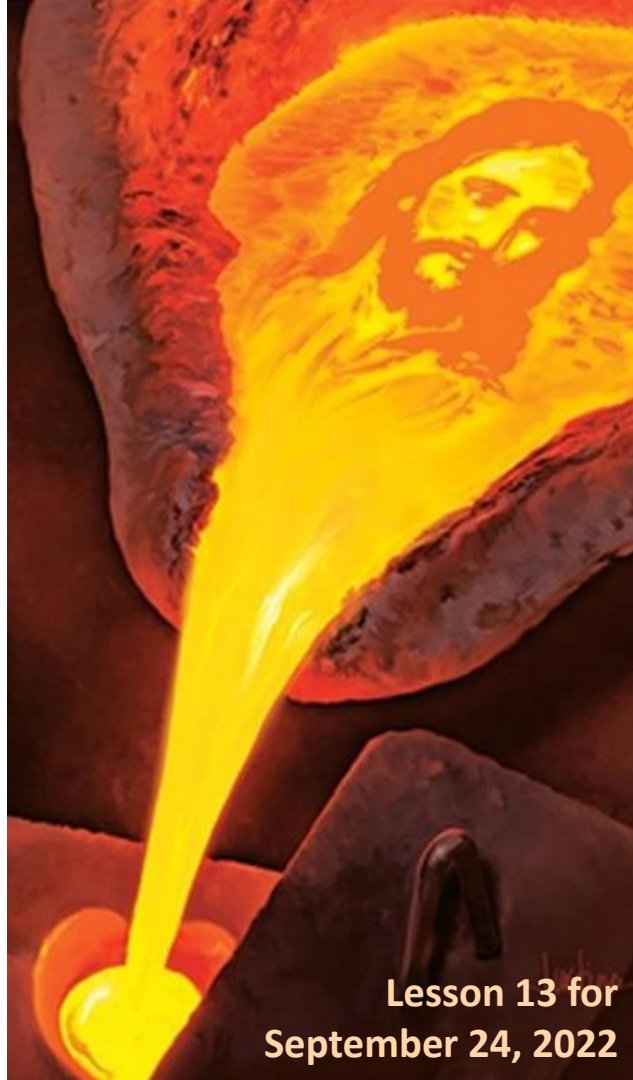


CHRIST IN THE CRUCIBLE

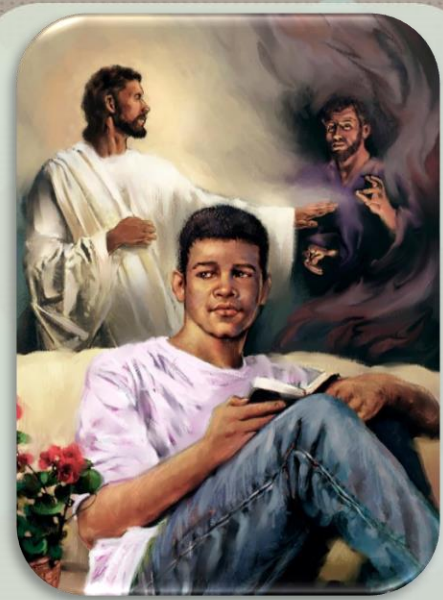


Lesson 13 for
September 24, 2022



We were born in a sinful world, within a conflict between good and evil. We cannot do anything about it. We were born in a crucible!

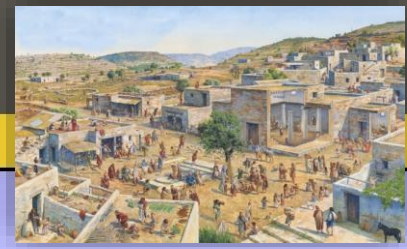
Jesus decided to enter the crucible of this world voluntarily. First, to set an example (Heb. 4:15). Second, to endure a more intense and special crucible so we could find hope in our own crucibles.



- ➡ The crucible in His childhood
- ➡ The crucible in His ministry
- ➡ The crucible at Gethsemane
- ➡ The crucible at the cross
- ➡ In the crucible with Christ

THE CRUCIBLE IN HIS CHILDHOOD

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)



Jesus could choose the environment where He would be born as a man.



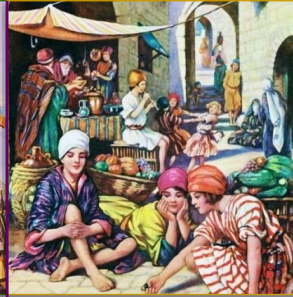
His family didn't deserve a special place in the inn (Luke 2:7)



His parents were poor (Luke 2:22-24; Lev. 12:6-8)



Herod tried to kill Him when He was a baby (Mt. 2:13)



He was raised in a town with a bad reputation (Jn. 1:46)

Imagine what Jesus had to face during His childhood and youth. He did everything according to God's will. He was the only sinless person among people who were sinners.



We are sometimes mocked and ridiculed just by trying to live according to God's will.

THE CRUCIBLE IN HIS MINISTRY

"He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces He was despised, and we held Him in low esteem." (Isaiah 53:3 NIV)

During His ministry, Jesus "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38). However...



He was accused of having made a pact with the devil (Mt. 12:24)



His neighbors and relatives looked down on Him (Mt. 13:55-57; Jn. 7:5)



People tried to kill Him several times (Lk. 4:29-30; Jn. 8:59; Jn. 10:31)



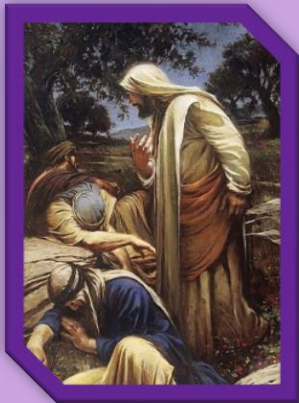
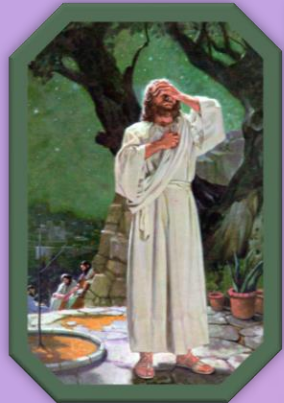
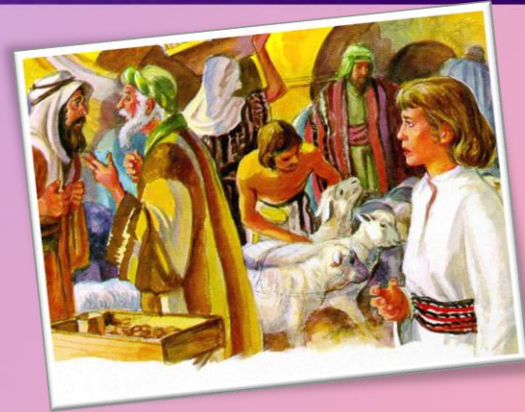
Jesus cried about the rejection of those who He had come to save (Mt. 23:37; Jn. 1:10-11)

THE CRUCIBLE AT GETHSEMANE

"Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.'" (Mark 14:34)

Jesus saw the sacrifices in the Temple when He was 12, then immediately understood His mission: He was "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29).

At Gethsemane, Jesus was finally facing His destiny. He was not going to just die, but to die the eternal death to pay for our sins. It was the ultimate risk, He could lose everything and become eternally separated from the Father.



He longed for His friends to intercede for Him, but they didn't. He longed for being freed from His pain. In His anguish, He was sweating blood. Finally, an angel came to comfort Him. He made the decision; He would drink the cup of pain because He loved us (Lk. 22:39-45).

THE CRUCIBLE AT THE CROSS

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)

Jesus was condemned to die the most shameful way of that time: by crucifixion. However, everything that happened around that cross is a testimony of the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus. That was not just the wrongful death of an innocent man.

- ▶ The place was surrounded by darkness (Lk. 23:44)
- ▶ The veil of the Most Holy Place was torn in two (Mr. 15:38)
- ▶ There was an earthquake (Mt. 27:51)
- ▶ Graves were opened (Mt. 27:52)

The “wrath of God” towards sin was deflected from us to Christ. He carried our sins on Him. Jesus suffered the “second death” in our place, so we can live for Him (Rev. 20:6).



IN THE CRUCIBLE WITH CHRIST

“But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” (1 Peter 4:13 NIV)

What lessons can we learn from how and why Jesus confronted His crucibles?

First, we can be sure that He understands us because He “has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin” (Heb. 4:15). Besides, His suffering was greater than ours because of His moral purity.

Second, we find hope, “hope of eternal life” (Titus 1.2). Our temporary crucibles feel small when we look at them through the lens of eternity.

No matter our troubles in this life, we must always thank Jesus for His upright life and His perfect sacrifice. Thanks to Him, even the crucible of death will pass.



“As we separate from the world and its customs, we shall meet with the displeasure of worldlings. The world hated the One who was the very embodiment of virtue, because He was better than they were [...] If the Majesty of heaven came to this world, and endured a life of humiliation and a death of shame, why should we shrink back because obedience involves a cross? If He was persecuted, can we expect better treatment? [...] He will comfort and sustain all who come to Him for help.”

E. G. W. (The Upward Look, November 7)