# **Learn to Read the Bible 2a – The Life of Jesus**

*Back cover: This book tells about Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.*

*Text modified from the Good News Translation (1994)*

## Jesus is born

Luke 2:1-20

The king ordered that everyone should be registered as taxpayers. Everyone had to go to the town of their ancestors for this. So, Joseph travelled to Bethlehem. He went with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage. Mary was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. All the inns were full, so they lodged in an animal shelter. There Mary gave birth to her first son. She laid her son on the animal’s hay.

Outside town there were shepherds. They were spending the night looking after their flocks. Suddenly, an angel appeared to them. The shepherds were very afraid. But the angel said, “Do not be afraid! I have very good news for you.”

The angel continued, “A child was born in town today. That child is your Savior and your Lord. He is the Christ. This is how you will recognize him: In town, you will find a baby. He is lying on animals’ hay.”

After this, the shepherds saw many more angels. They were singing praises to God,

*“Glory to God in heaven!*

*Peace to people on earth!”*

After that, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go into town. Let us see what God has told us about.” So, the shepherds hurried into town. There they found Mary and Joseph, and the baby boy lying on animals’ hay. They told them what the angel had said. Everyone was amazed.

Then the shepherds returned to their flocks. As they went, they sang songs of praise to God. Everything had been just as the angel had told them.

**Questions**

1. Why did Joseph go to Bethlehem?
2. Where did Mary lay her son?
3. Why did the angel say the shepherds do not need to be afraid?
4. What did the shepherds do after the angels left? Why?
5. What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus?

## Jesus as a child

Luke 2:41–52

Each year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem, the capital city. They went to celebrate the great festival. When Jesus was twelve years old the family went there as usual.

After the festival, his parents started travelling home. Jesus stayed in the city without his parents knowing. After travelling for a whole day, his parents started looking for Jesus. However, they could not find him amongst the travelers. So, they returned to the city.

On the third day they found him. He was sitting in the Temple with the religious teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. Jesus’ answers were so good that everyone was amazed.

His parents were astounded when they saw him. His mother said, “My son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been trying to find you. We have been very worried.” Jesus answered, “Why were you looking for me? Surely you knew you would find me here? This is my father’s house.” But his parents did not understand.

They all went back together to their home village. Jesus was obedient to his parents. He grew into a strong and wise young man. Both God and people were favorable towards him.

**Questions**

1. Why did Jesus and his parents go to Jerusalem?
2. Why could Jesus’ parents not find him?
3. What was Jesus doing when his parents found him?
4. What did his parents say to him?
5. What was Jesus like as a boy?

## Jesus begins his ministry

Luke 3:23; 4:14-30

When Jesus began his work, he was about thirty years old. The Holy Spirit was with him. News about Jesus was heard everywhere. Whenever Jesus taught, everyone spoke well about him.

Then Jesus went to his hometown. On the day of rest, he went to the house of prayer. He stood up to read the Holy Scriptures. He read a prophecy written by the prophet Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has chosen me to do this work. That is why I bring good news to the poor. I tell the captives that they will be free. I tell the blind that they will see again. I help those who are oppressed. I tell everyone that the time has come. Now the Lord will save his people.”

Everyone was listening and watching him carefully. Then Jesus said to them, “What I read has come true today.”

The people said that he had spoken well. However, they also wondered how this was possible. They said, “Is he not just the son of Joseph who we know?” Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not respected in their hometown.”

When the people heard him speak like this, they were filled with anger. They got up and dragged Jesus outside. They wanted to throw him off a cliff. But Jesus went away.

**Questions**

1. What did the people think about Jesus when he began his ministry?
2. What did Jesus read in the house of prayer?
3. What did Jesus say after finishing reading?
4. What did the people think about Jesus and his words?
5. What did they want to do to Jesus?

## Jesus calls his first disciples

Luke 5:1–11

One day, Jesus stood on the shore of the lake. He taught the people about God. So many people were coming to him, that they were pushing him.

Close by there were two empty boats. Jesus got into one of the boats. He asked a man called Simon to push the boat away from the shore. Then Jesus sat in the boat and taught the people.

Later, he said to Simon, “Take the boat out to the lake. Let your nets down, and you will catch fish.” Simon answered, “Teacher, we have been fishing all night. We have not caught anything. However, I will do as you ask. I will let the nets down again.”

Simon and the others did as Jesus said. They caught so many fish that their nets began to tear. They even waved to their friends to come and help them. Both boats were filled with fish.

Simon, James, and John were afraid. Simon threw himself down before Jesus. He said, “Lord, leave me! I am a sinful man!” But Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid! From now on, you will fish for people instead!”

The men left their boats on the shore. They followed Jesus.

**Questions**

1. What was Jesus teaching the people about?
2. What did Jesus tell Simon to do?
3. What did Simon answer to Jesus?
4. What did Simon do when they caught the fish?
5. What did Jesus say to Simon about his future?

## Jesus and a tax collector

Luke 19:1-10

One day, Jesus passed through a town. In that town, there was a tax collector, who was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was a little man and could not see Jesus because of the crowd. So, he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a large tree to see Jesus, who was going to pass that way.

When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to him, “Hurry down, because I must stay in your house today.” He hurried down and welcomed him with great joy.

All the people who saw it started grumbling, “Jesus has gone as a guest to the home of a sinner!”

The tax collector said to the Lord, “Listen, sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor. Also, if I have cheated anyone, I will pay back four times as much.”

Jesus said to him, “Salvation has come to this house today. I have come to seek and to save the lost.”

**Questions**

1. Why did the tax collector climb the tree?
2. What did Jesus tell him?
3. Why were the people who saw this not happy?
4. What did the tax collector say to Jesus?
5. What did Jesus say about the tax collector?

## Jesus enters Jerusalem

Luke 19:28–48

One day, Jesus went to Jerusalem. He walked ahead of his disciples. They came to two villages close to the city. Then he asked two disciples to go into the village. He asked them to bring a young donkey.

The disciples did as he requested. They brought the young donkey. Then they put their cloaks on it. Jesus rode on the animal towards the city.

People spread their cloaks on the road before him. A large crowd of his followers began to shout in joy. They said, “May God bless the king, who comes in the name of the Lord! May there be peace in heaven! May God be glorified!”

There were also some religious leaders present. They said, “Teacher, tell your disciples to be quiet!” But Jesus said to them, “If they keep quiet, even the stones will start shouting!”

Jesus went into the temple. He drove out the merchants who were there. He said to them, “God has said, ‘My house is a place for praying.’ However, you have made it into a place where thieves hide out!”

Jesus taught in the temple every day. The religious leaders wanted to kill him. However, they did not know how. Everyone was listening very closely to him.

**Questions**

1. What did Jesus ask the disciples to bring him?
2. What did the people do when they saw Jesus riding towards Jerusalem?
3. What did Jesus do in the temple?
4. What did the religious leaders want to do?

## The Lord’s Supper

Luke 22:1–20

The great festival called Passover was about to begin. At the time of the feast, Jesus sat down to eat with his disciples.

Jesus took a piece of bread and gave thanks to God. He broke it and gave it to them. He said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.”

After the meal, Jesus gave them a cup of wine. He said, “This is God’s new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

**Questions**

1. When did Jesus and the disciples eat together?
2. What did Jesus say about the bread?
3. What did he say about the wine?

## Jesus is arrested

Luke 22:39–54

Jesus went to the nearby hill to pray. His disciples went with him. Jesus said to them, “Pray that you will not be tested.”

Jesus went further away from them. He prayed, “Father, I am going to suffer. Take this suffering away from me. But do what you want, not what I want.” Then an angel from heaven came to help him. Jesus was very distressed.

Jesus got up and walked over to his disciples. The disciples were so sad that they had fallen asleep. He said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you will not be tested.”

As he was still speaking, a crowd of people came. The crowd was led by his disciple Judas. The men arrested Jesus. They took him away to the house of the High Priest.

**Questions**

1. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do?
2. What did Jesus pray?
3. What did Jesus find the disciples doing?
4. Who came to arrest Jesus?
5. Where did they take him?

Jesus is questioned

Luke 22:66–71

In the morning, the religious leaders gathered at the High Council. Jesus was brought before them.

They asked Jesus, “Are you the Christ?” Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me. And, if I ask you a question, you will not answer. From now on, the Son of Man will sit on the right side of God.” They asked him, “So, are you the Son of God?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am.”

They said, “What other evidence do we need? He confessed himself!”

**Questions**

1. What did the religious leaders ask Jesus?
2. What did Jesus answer them?
3. What did the religious leaders say?

## Jesus is condemned

Luke 23:1–25

Then the captors took Jesus before the Roman governor. There they began to accuse Jesus. They said, “This man is misleading our people. He has said that our people do not need to pay taxes. He has also claimed to be a king.”

The governor asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “So you say.”

Then the governor said, “I find this man to be innocent.” But they accused Jesus even more strongly, “He is starting a riot among the people throughout the country.”

Then the governor sent Jesus to be examined by Herod. Herod wanted to see a miracle, but Jesus did not answer him. Herod mocked Jesus. Then he sent him back to the governor.

Then the governor said, “You brought this man to me. You said he was misleading the people. You yourselves have seen me examine this man. In my opinion, he is innocent. I see no reason to condemn him to death. I will have him whipped. Then I will set him free.” But the crowd shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

In the end, their shouting succeeded. The governor sentenced Jesus to be crucified.

**Questions**

1. What did the captors tell the governor?
2. What did the governor ask Jesus?
3. What did Herod want with Jesus?
4. What did the governor think about Jesus?
5. Why did the governor agree to the crowd’s demand in the end?

## Jesus is crucified

Luke 23:26–43

The soldiers led Jesus away. They made a man called Simon carry the cross of Jesus. A large crowd of people were following.

There were also some women weeping for Jesus. Jesus turned to the women and said, “Do not cry for me. Cry for yourselves and your children. Very difficult times are coming.”

Also, two criminals were led out to be crucified with Jesus. They were brought to a place called the “Skull”. They crucified Jesus there. One criminal was crucified on his right side, and the other on his left.

Jesus said, “Father, forgive these people! They don't know what they are doing.” The leaders of the people mocked him, “If he really is God’s chosen one, may he save himself!” Also, the soldiers mocked him. They said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!” On his cross was written, “This is the king of the Jews.”

One of the criminals mocked him. He said, “Are you not God’s chosen one? Save yourself! Save us, too!”

But the other criminal rebuked him. He said, “Do you not fear God? We are receiving what is right for us.But as for this man, he has done nothing.”

Then the criminal turned to Jesus. He said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “I promise you: today you will be in paradise with me.”

**Questions**

1. Who carried Jesus’ cross?
2. What did Jesus say to the women?
3. What did Jesus ask his heavenly Father to do?
4. What did the first criminal say about Jesus?
5. What did Jesus say to the other criminal?

**Jesus dies**

Luke 23:44–49

Around midday, the sun stopped shining. Darkness covered the whole country for three hours. The curtain in the temple tore into two pieces.

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Father, I place my spirit in your hands!” After saying this he died.

The officer in charge saw what had happened. He began to respect God. He said, “Certainly this man was innocent.” Also, the people who had been watching went away. They were shocked by what they had seen.

The people went home feeling sad. But those who knew Jesus, remained there. They watched from a distance. Also, the women who had followed him from his home region were there.

**Questions**

1. What happened before Jesus died?
2. What did Jesus say at the time of his death?
3. What did the officer in charge say?
4. Who remained at the cross after the other people left?

## Jesus is buried

Luke 23:50–56

There was a man called Joseph. He was a good man. He was a member of the High Council. But he had not accepted the High Council’s decision to kill Jesus.

Joseph went to the Roman governor. He asked for the body of Jesus. He took the body of Jesus down from the cross. He wrapped the body in cloth. He placed the body in a new and empty tomb.

The women who had followed Jesus went with Joseph. They saw where Joseph put the body of Jesus.

The day of rest was about to begin. So, the women went back home. They prepared spices and perfumes for the body. On the day of rest, they rested.

**Questions**

1. What kind of man was Joseph?
2. What did Joseph do?
3. What did the women do?

## Jesus is raised from the dead

Luke 24:1–12

Early on Sunday morning, several of the women went to the tomb. They wanted to anoint the body of Jesus.

When they arrived at the tomb, they were surprised. The large stone had been moved. The tomb was open! The women entered the tomb, but the tomb was empty.

Suddenly they saw two men wearing very bright clothes. The women were very afraid. They bowed to the ground. The men said, “Why are you looking for Jesus? He is not here. He has been raised. Remember that he told you he must suffer and die. But he said that three days later he would rise from the dead.” Then the women remembered what Jesus had said.

They went to tell the disciples what they had seen and heard. The disciples did not believe the women. They thought the women were talking nonsense. However, Peter ran to the tomb. He wanted to see what had happened. He looked into the tomb. He only saw the burial cloth, nothing else. He was amazed. Then he went back home.

**Questions**

1. Why did the women go to the tomb?
2. Why were they afraid?
3. What did the two men say to the women?
4. What did the women do then?
5. What did Peter see when he reached the tomb?

## Jesus meets two disciples on the road

Luke 24:13–36

That same day, two disciples were walking home from the city. They talked about what had happened. The men were very sad.

Then Jesus joined them. They did not recognize him. Jesus said to them, “What are you talking about?” They answered, “Do you not know what has happened? There was a prophet called Jesus. He was respected by everyone.

“Three days ago, our rulers crucified and killed him. We thought he would be the ruler who would free our people. He was buried, but now his body cannot be found. Some women of our group have even said they have seen angels. They said the angels had told them that Jesus is alive.”

Jesus said to the men, “Why do you not believe the Scriptures? You know it is written that Christ must first suffer. After that he will enter his glory.” He explained to them how the Scriptures talk about himself.

The men arrived. Jesus acted as if he was going further. The men said, "It is already late. Stay with us for the night." So, Jesus stayed with them.

Jesus sat down with them to eat. He took the bread, he broke it, and he gave it to them. Then they recognized him as Jesus. As soon as they recognized him, he disappeared. The men said to each other, "Yes, of course it was Jesus! We felt so excited when he explained the Scriptures to us."

The men returned to the city right away. They told the disciples what had happened. The disciples told them that Jesus had appeared to Simon. At that very moment, Jesus himself appeared to them all.

**Questions**

1. Where were the two disciples going?
2. What did the disciples tell Jesus?
3. What did Jesus tell the disciples?
4. When did the disciples realize that the man with them was Jesus?
5. What did the disciples do then?

## Jesus is taken up to heaven

Luke 24:50–53

Jesus took the disciples out of the city of Jerusalem. He raised his hands and blessed them. At that moment, he was taken up into heaven. The disciples worshipped him. Then they went back into the city. They were very happy. They continued to give thanks to God every day.

**Questions**

1. Where did Jesus and the disciples go?
2. What did the disciples do after Jesus was taken to heaven?