CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

NOVEMBER2021

Scripture Story: Matthew 27:31-53; Mark 15:20-38; Luke 23:26-46; John 19:16-30.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* or *Humble Hero,* chapters 78, 79.

Christwise



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flashlight

"The Savior made no murmur of complaint. His face remained calm and serene, but great drops of sweat stood upon His brow. There was no pitying hand to wipe the death dew from His face, nor words of sympathy and unchanging fidelity to stay His human heart. While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, Jesus prayed for His enemies, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 744).

keytext

"It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last."

(Luke 23:44-46, NIV)

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what do you think?

Review how well you remember the details surrounding the cross by taking the following quiz:

1. What was written on the cross of Jesus?
   a. Jesus is Lord
   b. Jesus is the Son of God
   c. Jesus saves
   d. This is Jesus, the King of the Jews
2. In fulfillment of another prophecy, which awful punishment was not inflicted on Jesus during His last 24 hours:
   a. Body scourged
   b. Purple robe draped over His cut and bleeding back
   c. Legs broken on the cross
   d. Side pierced with a spear
3. Simon, the man who carried the cross for Jesus, was from:
   a. Cyrene
   b. Jerusalem
   c. Rome
   d. Alexandria
4. When the centurion in charge of Jesus' crucifixion heard what Jesus said from the cross and saw Him breathe His last, what did he conclude?
   a. "Truly, this was the Son of God."
   b. "Truly, this was a good man."
   c. "Truly, this man was not like the other criminals who were crucified today."
   d. "Truly, God will avenge these murderers."

Answers: 1. d; 2. c; 3. a; 4. a.

INTO THE STORY

"As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means 'the place of the skull'). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!'

"In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God."' In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

"From the noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?'* (which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?').

"When some of those standing there heard this, they said, 'He's calling Elijah.' Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him.'

"And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

"At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people."

(Matthew 27:32-53, NIV)

did you know?

Some Bible scholars say that Golgotha ("skull") gets its name from its appearance. Golgotha could have been a place for regular executions. It was easily accessible, just outside the city. In this way government leaders believed that executions held there would serve as a deterrent to crime.

OUT OF THE STORY

Why did darkness fall over the countryside and the city for three hours?

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What did Jesus die from?

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Why didn't Jesus come down from the cross?

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What is the significance of the curtain in the Temple being torn in two?

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If you were the editor of the Jerusalem *Herald,* write the headline you would use to announce the story of the Crucifixion:

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Imagine it is the day following Jesus' death. Write an obituary for Him:

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punch lines

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" **(Titus 2:11-14, NIV).**

"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" **(Isaiah 53:5, NIV).**

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole' " **(Galatians 3:13, NIV).**

further insight

"With amazement the angels beheld the infinite love of Jesus, who, suffering the most intense agony of mind and body, thought only of others, and encouraged the penitent soul to believe."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 752

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Matthew 27:32-53; Mark 15:20-38; Luke 23:26-49; and John 19:16-37.

Ellen White says, "It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83). How well do you know the story of the Crucifixion?

How can my thinking about the closing scenes of Christ's life help me to love Him more and to be filled with His spirit?

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How can imagining Christ's life and death help me to overcome temptation?

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Sunday

Read Galatians 3:13.

After reviewing the *Into the Story* section, react to the observation of John Stott in *The Cross of Christ:*

"I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I turn to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God-forsaken darkness.

"That is the God for me. He set aside His immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death."[1]

How does the cross affect your belief in God? Could God have redeemed the human race without pain or suffering? Explain. What does the cross tell us about Jesus' love?

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Monday

Read Luke 23:44-46.

Consider the *Key Text* in the context of Mel Gibson's comments about his film *The Passion of the Christ:*

"It's time to get back to a basic message, the message that was given. . . . Christ spoke of faith, hope, love, and forgiveness. And these are things I think we need to be reminded of again. He forgave as He was tortured and killed. And we could do with a little of that behavior."[2]

Tuesday

Read Hebrews 12:1, 2.

Read the *Flashlight* section and ask yourself these questions:

- How could Jesus remain calm on the cross? Was this human strength, divine strength, or a combination of both? Do we have access to this same power to be calm in dire circumstances?

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- If you could have offered Jesus "words of sympathy" while He hung on the cross, what would you have said to Him?

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- What "enemy" is God calling you to pray for?

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Wednesday

Read Isaiah 53 and Leviticus 16:1-34.

What parallels do you notice between Jesus as our sacrifice and the ancient practice of sacrificing a lamb?

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Thursday

Read Titus 2:11-14.

This passage found in this week's *Punch Lines.* Give three examples of what your life would look like if you were to live a self-controlled, upright, and godly life in this present age? Be as specific as possible.

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Friday

Read Isaiah 53:5.

Keeping in mind what happened at the cross, how can I live under the influence of Christ today?

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[1] Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992), as quoted in Bible Illustrator, Parsons Technology.

[2] Mel Gibson, interviewed on *The O'Reilly Factor,* Jan. 16, 2003.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or *Humble Hero*, chapters 78, 79.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URIhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.

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