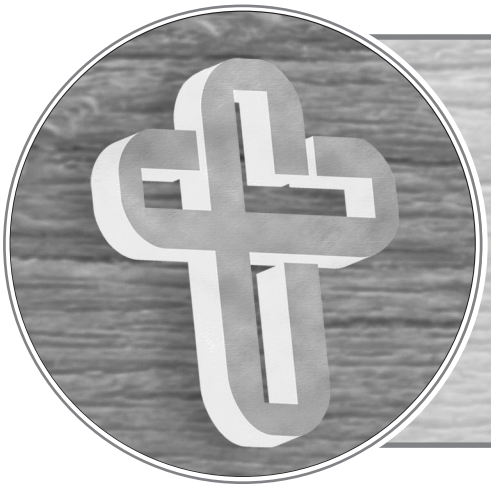


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
MAY 03 2025

a tumultuous homecoming

Scripture Story: Luke 4:16-30.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 23; 24.
Key Text: Luke 4:18, 19.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The three-and-one-half-year ministry of the adult Jesus includes His repeated manifestations that the kingdom of God is at hand. A subordinate theme is the attitude of those from Nazareth who found it especially difficult to believe His divine connection, given they saw Him raised from infanthood. Interwoven through all this is the prophetic timetable that was fulfilled at every turn. This week's lesson illustrates all three elements as we see Jesus come home to Nazareth.

The words He speaks in the synagogue excite His listeners as if they are hearing the text for the first time. In a way, they are, for He speaks them with grace, power, and authority, giving a true interpretation at odds with their own. Their excitement turns quickly to anger as they realize the import of His words. In a flash they turn on Him with murderous intent.

The lesson ends with a miraculous rescue, directed by His Father. Jesus allows Himself to be forced to a hilltop by the frenzied mob, but then is miraculously cloaked by angels as He literally disappears and walks unseen through the crowd. Imagine their perplexity! Imagine His sorrow at their actions and His resolve to bring the great controversy to a close.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Recognize that Jesus is the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies and understand what Messiah came to do. *(Know)*
- Realize that Jesus was unaccepted by those who knew Him longest. *(Feel)*
- Resolve to trust that accepting Jesus as God is their pathway to eternity. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Son, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 4: "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (Isa. 53:4-6; Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Jesus didn't draw people to Himself by focusing on externals. It was the power of His message coupled with the working of the Holy Spirit that softened hearts and ennobled minds. "His words are truth, and they have a deeper significance than appears on the surface. All the sayings of Christ have a value beyond their unpretending appearance. Minds that are quickened by the Holy Spirit will discern the value of these sayings. They will discern the precious gems of truth, though these may be buried treasures" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 110). Ask your students for personal examples they can share.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Italian mathematician and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) improved the telescope and was first to turn its optical power from objects on Earth to the sky, making numerous observations about the Earth and sun. After years of focus on his teachings, Galileo was interrogated before the Inquisition in 1633, softened some of his views, and ordered by the pope to be imprisoned indefinitely under house arrest. He died at his villa in 1642.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Most times, when someone reads a section of the Scriptures aloud, listeners usually respond with silence, affirmative head nods, maybe some amens, or sometimes exultations. One day long ago in Nazareth, when Jesus read that day's scripture in the synagogue, the listeners turned on Him with a vengeance, wanting to kill Him for having heard what He'd said. His powerful words drew a powerful response.

Jesus endured the consequences of providing a new way of looking at things that was at odds with the church of His time (the Jewish leaders).

Are you willing to endure hardship for holding to a Son-centered view?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

Ask your students about the special difficulty Jesus faced by going home to Nazareth to interact with those who had known Him the longest.

Ellen White's added insight explains it was Jesus reading their minds and speaking to their unspoken thoughts that led to their turning on Him. Their view of themselves as God's chosen people was imperiled.

Can your students think of any other time that Jesus was saved from harm because it was not yet His time?

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: John 4:21-30; 12:31-33; Matthew 15:30-32.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

In his Gospel Luke presents Jesus as the friend of humanity. In this week's story the reaction that greeted Jesus was far from friendly. This was His first visit to His earthly hometown since taking up His public ministry. Mary and His brothers and sisters still lived there and were likely in the synagogue to see their neighbors turn on Him.

Jesus read Isaiah 6:1, 2 from a scroll while standing—a customary show of reverence for the written Word. He purposefully did not read the closing clause of verse 2 that talked about vengeance, because the Jews had wrongly believed their salvation was automatic because they were Jews, not by a personal submission to God. Also according to custom, Jesus presented His sermon while seated. That special seat, located on a raised platform near the lectern, was sometimes called "the chair of Moses."

They clamored for signs of His divinity, but it was their lack of faith that prevented Jesus from performing miracles in Nazareth. It was not because He was unable to do so, but because

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Point Out the Parallels

There are many parallels to notice when reading Bible stories, and pointing them out to your students, or asking them to look for them, goes a long way in understanding the Bible even better. In the story found in Luke 4:16-30 here are some to note:

The temple as a focal point used by Jesus when He was 12, when He drove out the money changers, and when He spoke to the locals in Nazareth.

Jesus quoting Scripture to help people see He is the fulfillment of what had long been foretold.

The times Jesus was miraculously rescued because it was not yet His time to die.

they were unprepared to receive the blessings He wished to give them.

"Aware that the words of Jesus described them perfectly, they were unwilling to hear more. To accept Him they must admit that they were no better than the heathen, whom they looked upon as dogs" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 731).

"As they opened the door to doubt, their hearts became so much the harder for having been momentarily softened. Satan was determined that blind eyes should not that day be opened, nor souls bound in slavery be set at liberty. With intense energy he worked to fasten them in unbelief. They made no account of the sign already given, when they had been stirred by the conviction that it was their Redeemer who addressed them" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 238).

Their guilty consciences rose to silence His words of truth. With murderous hearts, even on the Sabbath, they took Him to a cliff and were prepared to hurl Him down. The traditionally accepted site, referred to as the "Mount of the Precipitation," is likely not the actual location of this incident, because it is more than a Sabbath day's journey from Nazareth. More likely is a limestone cliff about 40 feet (12 meters) high at the southwestern corner of Nazareth. Angels shielded Him and took Him to safety. His hour had not yet come.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Search online for images of "Mount Precipice," the traditional site where Jesus was taken by the Nazareth mob, then shielded by angels. Assuming the site is correct, you can point to it with certainty as a place where Jesus walked,

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

angels gathered, and a supernatural rescue took place. As your students view the images, ask them to think about and share ideas about places in today's world where angels tread.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

In this week's lesson, when Jesus spoke to the people in the synagogue, His words at first were greeted with amazement. Yet many thought, *Was this not Joseph's son?* and fostered doubt concerning Him. He then brought a message home to each of His listeners that did not go down easy. It was as if they were seeing themselves in a mirror and not liking what they saw. They became so furious that the people in His hometown sought to kill Him by throwing Him off a cliff!

What is your reaction as you hear Jesus' words spoken to you?



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*),* chapters 23; 24.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Luke 4:16-30.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 23; 24.

a tumultuous homecoming



Photo by Colleen Cahill

keytext

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

(Luke 4:18, 19, NIV)

flashlight

"The Messiah's coming had been first announced in Judea. In the temple at Jerusalem the birth of the forerunner had been foretold to Zacharias as he ministered before the altar. On the hills of Bethlehem the angels had proclaimed the birth of Jesus. To Jerusalem the magi had come in search of Him. In the temple Simeon and Anna had testified to His divinity. . . . The flashing forth of His divinity in the cleansing of the temple, His miracles of healing, and the lessons of divine truth that fell from His lips, all proclaimed that which after the healing at Bethesda He had declared before the Sanhedrin,—His Sonship to the Eternal" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 231).

what do you think?

What would you expect to see today if you'd joined a throng to hear a preacher you'd heard about who spoke truth in a new and powerful way, brought about strong reaction from his listeners, and rebuked the religious establishment? Choose from the list below. Someone who:

____ has his own talk show
____ blogs
____ wears sharp-looking suits
____ has a beautiful wife
____ podcasts his sermons

What if you found out en route that the preacher was a guy you'd grown up with, who was studious and attentive to duty as a child, but who didn't appear to you to be someone who would grow up to be anything special? Then, upon seeing him, you realize that he doesn't fit what you'd envisioned at all *and* that He *is* someone special!

INTO THE STORY

"He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

"All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. 'Isn't this Joseph's son?' they asked.

"Jesus said to them, 'Surely you will quote this proverb to me: "Physician, heal yourself!" And you will tell me, "Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum."'

" 'Truly, I tell you,' he continued, 'no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.'

"All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way."

(Luke 4:16-30, NIV)



did you know?

Ellen G. White, in vision, saw Jesus many times. Here is one description she gives:

"As children looked upon His countenance, they saw purity and goodness shining forth from His eyes. In His countenance gentleness, meekness, love, and conscious power were combined. But though every word, every gesture, every expression of His face, betokened His divine supremacy, humility marked His deportment and bearing" (*My Life Today*, p. 300).

OUT OF THE STORY

The words Jesus read from the scroll in the synagogue were punctuated by His startling declaration: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Had you been there, what would you have thought upon hearing those words, knowing you were looking at a local boy, now grown?

_____
_____
_____

Why do you think His listeners were amazed "at the gracious words" He spoke?

_____
_____
_____

Why do you think a prophet "is not accepted in his hometown"?

_____
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_____

Their amazement quickly turned to fury. Why?

_____
_____
_____

What did Jesus mean when He quoted a proverb, "Physician, heal yourself," in the context in which He used it?

_____
_____
_____

Why was the mob unsuccessful in its attempt to kill Jesus then and there?

_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival. . . . While his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. . . . After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.' 'Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' " **(Luke 2:42-49, NIV).**

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing" **(Matthew 23:37, NIV).**

"Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, 'Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.' At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come" **(John 7:28-30, NIV).**

further insight

"We have reached the period foretold in these scriptures. The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord's coming in glory as near at hand."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 235

"Our standing before God depends, not upon the amount of light we have received, but upon the use we make of what we have."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 239

Sabbath

Read Mark 9:14-29.

What assumptions arise if you hear of some popular preacher making all the news? What trappings surround them? How is fame handled?

When you grow up with someone, you may have a hard time accepting that that person has become a "big shot." This is why it was probably hard for those in Jesus' hometown to accept Him as Messiah and even more so as God. But He was. "Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God" (The Son, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 4).

The adult Jesus was not esteemed by those who knew Him in Nazareth. Many may have felt what the father of the possessed boy felt when he cried "I do believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24, NASB). How about you? Have you found it difficult to hear God speak through people you may consider "not religious enough"? Why? Why not?

_____

_____

_____

Sunday

Read Luke 4:28-30.

Sometimes the truth hurts. That's what happened when Jesus spoke truth and many of His listeners went berserk. In their crazed state the mob propelled Him to a cliff with the intent of throwing Him down the side. But their plans went awry as they reached the edge. God calls us to speak the truth, even when it's not popular. Does He always protect us from the consequences? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

Monday

Read Isaiah 61.

When Jesus read from what is now known as Isaiah 61, those words applied to Him in prophetic fulfillment. Is there a Bible passage you can read knowing the words apply to you, not as prophetic fulfillment, but in certainty? Write it below:

_____

_____

_____

Tuesday

Read John 1:4, 5.

In today's reading, Jesus is described as a light in the darkness of ignorance. On rare occasions He allowed that light to shine brighter than usual.

The flashing forth of His divinity in the cleansing of the Temple is strikingly described by Ellen G. White on pages 157 and 158 of *The Desire of Ages*, including this statement: "His eye sweeps over the multitude, taking in every individual. . . . A divine light illuminates His countenance. He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice—the same that upon Mount Sinai proclaimed the law that priests and rulers are transgressing—is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: 'Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.' " How does this display of Jesus reveal His divinity?

_____

_____

_____

Wednesday

Read John 1:1, 14.

The incarnation of the Son of God, at once fully human and fully God, is an abiding mystery. What does the Bible say about this in John 1:1, 14? When did Jesus come into full awareness of His duality? What sorrow do you think He felt to be despised and rejected of men, even those from Nazareth who knew Him longest?

_____

_____

_____

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Temple played a strong role in the training of young Jewish children, including the child Jesus. It was a place where questions and answers pertaining to spiritual matters were freely expressed, the history of ancestors learned, and relationships developed. Is this true for your Sabbath School? If so, what makes it that way? If not, what do you think could be done to make it that way? What encouragement do we have in our reading today to keep learning?

_____

_____

_____

Friday

Read Psalm 34:8.

It was hard for those who grew up with Jesus to accept Him as Messiah or even as a prophet. Someone you know may be skeptical about Jesus and Christianity based on what they have been told about it. You might be able to recall some negative things that have been said about Christians or Christianity, so how would you answer those critics? What support can you find in our reading today? Do you have a personal experience of God's goodness that you could share with your class on Sabbath?

_____

_____

_____

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 23; 24.

* A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.