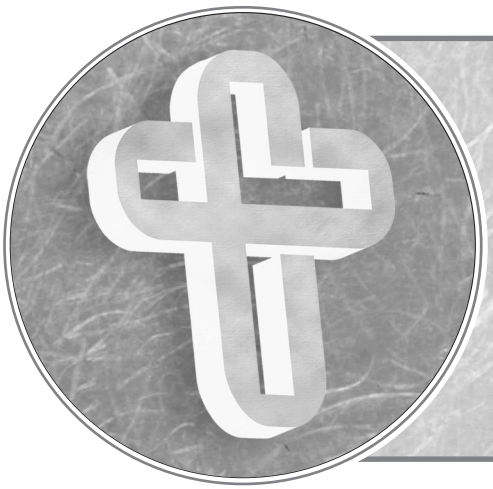


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
SEPTEMBER 06 2025

# wake up!

**Scripture Story:** John 11.
**Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 58; 59.
**Key Text:** John 11:35.

## PREPARING TO TEACH

### I. SYNOPSIS

Of the many individuals Jesus healed, taught, and interacted with, we know only a few people He considered close friends. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were dear friends of Jesus. This week's lesson examines the death of Lazarus and the unforgettable scene of Christ raising him back to life. This chapter is rich with drama, story, and unforgettable sayings of Christ, as well as fundamental truths about life, death, and hope.

**The Story.** This event is pivotal in that it cements in the minds of the religious leaders that Jesus must go away (die). John 11:47 says: "Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs' " (NASB). The conclusion of their deliberations is summarized in verse 53: "So from that day on they planned together to kill Him" (NASB). But the story of Jesus raising His friend Lazarus to life again is one of the greatest events because this becomes a constant reminder that God indeed has power over death.

The story contains sayings such as: "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God" (John 11:4, NASB), and "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies" (John 11:25, NASB). Even the shortest memory verse in the Bible where "Jesus wept" is colored in by the story. Why did Jesus weep? It wasn't just death, or sadness, but stubbornness as well. The mission of Christ is clearly conveyed in this event in which Jesus comes to save. Yet many don't know how that will happen, and many don't even believe that needs to happen. While Jesus calls for Lazarus to "Wake up!" He calls everyone to do the same.

### II. TARGET

The students will:

- See the humanity and the divinity of Christ and His mission. *(Know)*
- Feel confident that Christ is bigger than death. *(Feel)*
- Purpose in their hearts to receive the One who is the Resurrection and the Life. *(Respond)*

### III. EXPLORE

**Death and Resurrection,** Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 26: "The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Dan. 12:2, 13; Isa. 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 20:1-10.)"

# 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.*

The voting questions can be argued from either side, but taking a position is part of the learning objective. You might have the students write out their response to this question anonymously on a small sheet of paper or a 3" x 5" card and read the responses—especially why they answered the way they did. *Why is raising people from the dead so amazing?* It is the one thing we can't do on our own. Some miracles seem more miraculous. But are they? The other voting question has to do with the motivation behind Jesus raising the dead. *Why Lazarus? Why not more people?* If this is the miracle that will "cause" people to believe, why are there not more than four or five stories such as this one?

### *Illustration*

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

Martha was the fixer. A doer. When there was a problem, she did something about it. No sense in crying and getting all emotional over spilled milk. Find a way to keep the rest from spilling. That was her way.

Mary was the feeler. When things happened, she felt it deeply and expressed her emotions freely. But on the day that their beloved brother lay sick unto death, both Mary and Martha came to the same conclusion. Jesus. He was the only one who could fix this and help everyone to feel better. But their fledgling hope was snuffed out by the blast of grief when their brother died before Jesus got there. When they saw Him next, Martha had a big question for her friend Jesus. To her surprise, He had one for her.

Answer the question Jesus asked of Martha, "Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" Do *you* believe this? If so, and if many others believe this as well, why is death such a sad event? We are sad because we will miss our loved ones. Because while we "believe" Jesus is correct, our belief is not entirely strengthened by our experience.

## II. TEACHING THE STORY

### *Bridge to the Story*

*Share the following in your own words:*

As you read this story and meander through the many beautiful portions of this event, Jesus becomes more vivid. Believers such as Mary and Martha are more vividly seen. The Pharisees are clearly exposed. Notice how death, life, and most of all, Jesus makes everyone and everything appear as it really is. What is death—really? What is life—really? Who are we—really? Who is Jesus—really?

### *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.*

- Read John 11:1-16 and 11:45-57 for the rest of the story.
- *Circle* the names of all the key people mentioned in this story.
- *Underline* the words and phrases that make up the heart of this story.
- What are some basic questions that come to your mind as you read this passage?
- Mary and Martha both approach Jesus in this story. What is similar about their interaction with Jesus and what is different?
- Why do you think Jesus wept? Was He sad that Lazarus had died? Was He sad because everyone else was crying? What about this event brings Jesus to tears?
- In this story the words Jesus speaks are as powerful as what He feels and what He does. What saying in this story do you think is most significant? Why?
- In a world where death, the afterlife, and the immortality of the soul are prominent themes, what does this story teach about death and the afterlife?
- Describe the various reactions of the people that witnessed the raising of Lazarus?
- What surprises you the most in this story?
- Why do you think this story is included in John's Gospel?

### *Extra Questions for Teachers:*

- How do amazing events such as this clarify who we are and what death is?
- Discuss how people can witness an event such as this and still seek to put Jesus to death? (For another look at this question, read Luke 16:19-31.)

*Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story:* 1 Kings 17:17-23; 2 Kings 4:18-35; 2 Kings 13:20, 21; Luke 8:52-55; Luke 7:12-15; Acts 9:36-41; Acts 20:9, 10.

### *Sharing Context and Background*

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

The setting of this story is crucial to putting together all the wonderful pieces that are familiar. One key reality is that the public perception of Christ was not entirely popular. He said things that caused controversy. In fact, the religious leaders in Jerusalem were looking for a reason to get their hands on Jesus. This mood of unpopularity and suspicion was evidenced by the comment Thomas made when Jesus decided to go back to the Jerusalem area: "Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him' " (John 11:16, NIV). Going back to Bethany, right on the edge of Jerusalem, was to put Jesus and the disciples in harm's way. Clearly, Jesus was ready to meet His ultimate calling—to die as an atoning sacrifice.

So why did Jesus wait a few days? First of all, although Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary, and Martha as friends, He also seized this moment as a time to teach people about who He was. Perhaps Jesus knew that a seed planted about the reality of the resurrection would help believers believe more

### *Tips for Top-Notch Teaching*

*Word Studying*

Language is our chief way to communicate ideas. Therefore, words become important. But words over time can be the teacher's tool or the teacher's frustration. For example, what does it mean when someone is "cool"? Below normal temperature? Someone with a frosty disposition? Someone socially acceptable—even admirable? Yes, to all. The phrase "I love you" can mean: "I am in love with you." "I appreciate you." "I will put a roof over your head and protect you." There are so many ways to interpret words. As teachers, what you mean by what you say is crucial. In understanding the Bible, finding out what the Bible writers mean by what they say is essential to understanding the story. Make a word study reference tool or a commentary your friend!





## 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 quote in* Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

fully in His. Furthermore, "Rabbinical literature suggests that the burial place should not be visited for three days to make sure that person was really dead. . . . Jesus waited to appear on the fourth day so that there would be no question in anyone's mind that Lazarus was truly dead when called forth from the grave" (*Victor Bible Background Commentary*, p. 247).

When Jesus finally arrived in Bethany He was met by Mary and Martha—weeping bitterly. The Greek word for this is *embrimaomai*—which isn't just crying, but an outburst of anger added to it. All the elements of the story began to funnel into one chief moment: the growing unpopularity of Jesus because He was teaching things that were difficult to hear. The continual desire to have Him prove who He was. The sin and sadness all around Him mixed with the hateful stubbornness of Israel's shepherds boiled down to a showdown with death. And the whole drama made Jesus weep. But not the same kind of weeping as Mary and Martha. When "Jesus wept," the word *dakryo* does not convey an angry outburst, but simply means "shed tears" with quiet grief.

## III. CLOSING

### *Activity*

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

In the extra passages for further study at the end of the *Out of the Story* section of this week's lesson are the stories of resurrected people in Scripture. Each one is different. Each one can teach about God's power to overcome death. Organize the class into seven groups and give each group one of the resurrection stories. Have them read it and bring a brief summary about what happened, what they learned about God's power over death, and the impact such a victory has on people. (If you have a small class, either give a resurrection story to each student or have the class do two or three together.)

*Ask:* "In light of these stories, how can we be more confident about eternal life and the resurrection that will soon appear?" Invite the students to reach out to someone who has lost a loved one and offer a word of encouragement.

### *Summary*

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

Jesus wept—the easiest memory verse in the whole Bible. But we can only guess at how alone Jesus must have felt with His disciples short-circuiting, His friends wailing and accusing Him of failing to be there for them, the Pharisees and Sadducees watching carefully to arrest Him, and the overwhelming grief that "these people don't even get why I am here." So do *you* know why He came? Was it just to feed the hungry and befriend the lonely? Did He come to catch a bunch of fish for Peter and save the celebration at the wedding with more wine?

From the beginning of time "the wages of sin is death." We are dead in our sin and need someone to save us. In order to save us, someone needs to die for us. And in order for all of this to matter, that person needs to rise up to a new life. When someone comes back from the grave in Scripture, it is only a taste, a reminder that death " 'has been swallowed up in victory' " (1 Corinthians 15:54, NIV) because "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV).



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 58; 59.

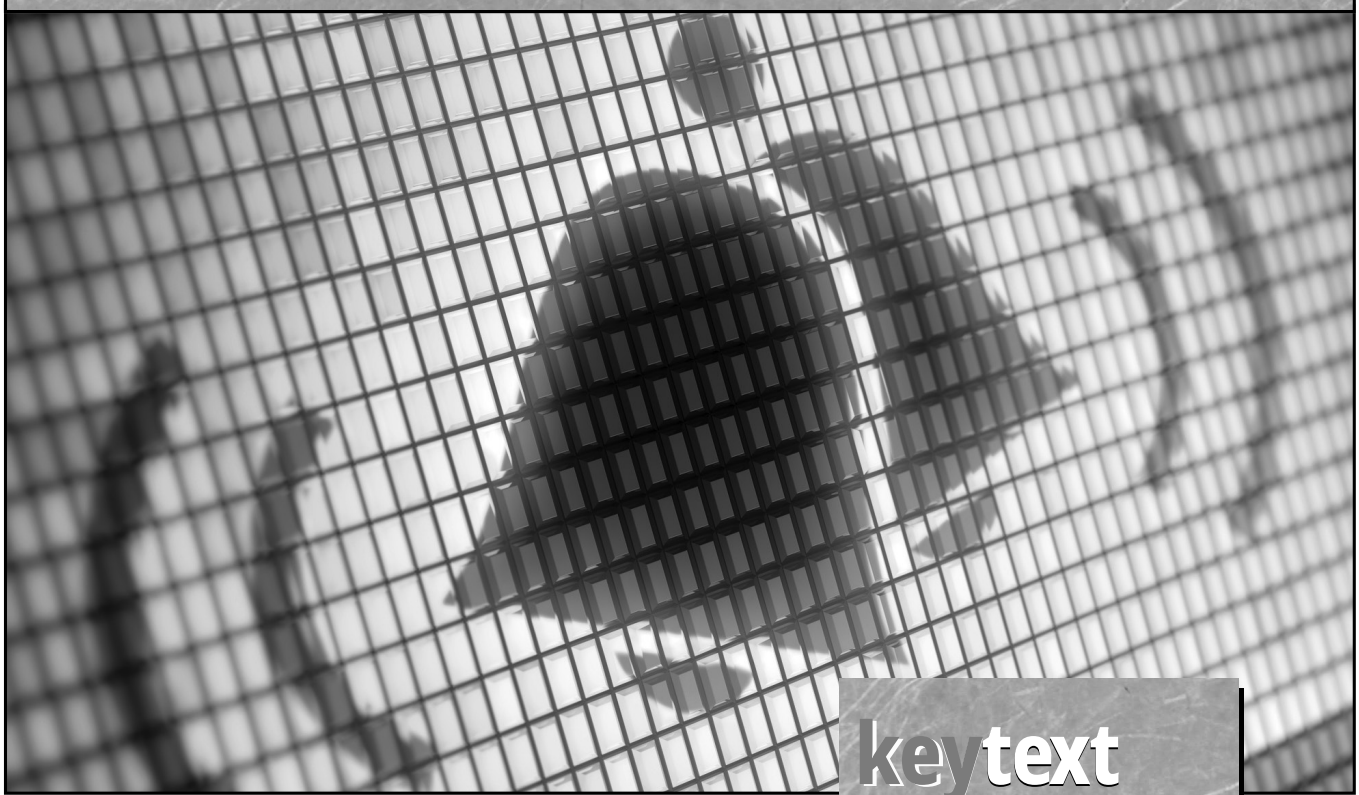
*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
SEPTEMBER062025

# STUDENT LESSON

**Scripture Story:** John 11.
**Commentary:** *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 58; 59.

## wake up!



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## flashlight

"Christ did not weep for Lazarus; for He was about to call him from the grave. He wept because many of those now mourning for Lazarus would soon plan the death of Him who was the resurrection and the life" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 533).

## key text

"Jesus wept."

**(John 11:35, NIV)**

# what do you think?

**Voting: Agree or Disagree**

____ Raising someone from the dead is far more powerful a miracle than feeding 5,000 people or healing someone from leprosy.

____ The miraculous signs Jesus did grew out of His compassion for broken people more than His desire to prove to people He was the Son of God.

Indicate why you voted "agree" or "disagree."

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# INTO THE STORY

**"On his arrival, Jesus found** that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. . . . When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

"'Lord,' Martha said to Jesus, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died'. . . .

"Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

"Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

"'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'

"After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. 'The Teacher is here,' she said, 'and is asking for you.' When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. . . .

"When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 'Where have you laid him?' he asked.

"'Come and see, Lord,' they replied.

"Jesus wept.

"Then the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!'. . .

"Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 'Take away the stone,' he said. . . .

"So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.'

"When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

"Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.'"

**(John 11:17-44, NIV)**

# did you know?

**When Mary and Martha** were weeping for their dead brother, Lazarus, it was more like wailing. In fact, did you know that in those days, people were paid to wail and weep at funerals just to emphasize the sadness of death? When Jesus wept, the word is not the same word for wailing, but for a deep, quiet grief that words can't really capture.

# OUT OF THE STORY

Read John 11:1-16 and 45-57 for the rest of the story.

*Circle* the names of all the key people mentioned in this story.

*Underline* the words and phrases that make up the heart of this story.

Mary and Martha both approach Jesus in this story. What is similar about their interactions with Jesus and how are they different?

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Why do you think Jesus wept? Was He sad that Lazarus had died? Was He sad because everyone else was crying?

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What saying in this story do you think is most significant? Why?

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In a world in which death, the afterlife, and the immortality of the soul are prominent themes, what does this story teach about death and the afterlife?

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Describe the various reactions of the people that witnessed the raising of Lazarus.

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What surprises you the most in this story?

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Why do you think this story is included in John's Gospel?

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# punch lines

**"Brothers and sisters, we want** you to know about those Christians who have died so you will not be sad, as others who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and that he rose again. So, because of him, God will raise with Jesus those who have died. What we tell you now is the Lord's own message. We who are living when the Lord comes again will not go before those who have already died. The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. And those who have died believing in Christ will rise first" **(1 Thessalonians 4:13-16, NCV).**

**"Still, I know that God** lives—the One who gives me back my life—and eventually he'll take his stand on earth. And I'll see him—even though I get skinned alive!—see God myself, with my very own eyes. Oh, how I long for that day!" **(Job 19:23-27, *The Message*).**

**"Truly, truly, I say to you,** an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man" **(John 5:25-27, NASB).**



# further insight

**"Death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus in the presence of the Life-giver. Therefore Christ remained away. He suffered the enemy to exercise his power, that He might drive him back, a conquered foe."**

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 528

## Sabbath

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.**

Read and respond to the voting question in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. Looking at the miraculous things Jesus did, some things today seem more miraculous than others. Mending a broken hand or opening blind eyes is common practice for doctors, but most of medicine's power today is an attempt to delay the inevitable—death. Re-read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 and reflect on how Christ has done at Calvary what medicine could never do.

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## Sunday

**Read Psalm 139:16, 17.**

Read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study. This week's lesson is filled with various characters, emotions, and events that are relevant to all people today. With so many parts of the raising of Lazarus story to choose from, which scene compels you the most? Why? When you read this story, what do you think God is trying to say to you about your life?

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## Monday

**Read John 11:35.**

The *Key Text* this week is short; in fact, the shortest. But don't let the size of the verse trick you into not grasping its full meaning. Why did Jesus weep? Look at the *Did You Know?* section as well and examine what you think troubled Jesus to tears more: the apparent effect death had over His friends, or the stubborn shortsighted minds that were planning to kill Him. Perhaps this day you could look at your life through the lens of what makes Jesus weep. When people are mistreated, Jesus weeps. When people don't—or won't—look at the big picture of the plan of salvation, Jesus weeps. When people are confused about the future and no one is there to say, "God has made a way," Jesus weeps. While this verse may be easy to remember, try not to forget its meaning.

## Tuesday

**Read Ezekiel 18:32.**

Read the quote from *The Desire of Ages* in the *Flashlight* section that describes what really caused Jesus to come to tears. Whom do you know who is bent against God, for one reason or another? Whom can you think of who resists God's presence in their life? Begin to pray for them that the compassionate Savior may soften their heart. This takes time, so keep at it and perhaps keep a journal of your prayers. But know that Jesus cares more for their stubborn condition than anyone else and longs to see them restored to hope.

## Wednesday

The *Punch Lines* in this week's lesson are a beautiful string of pearls that show the beauty of God's grace and the power of His compassion. If you had to choose one verse from the *Punch Lines* that you could share with someone who is grieving over the loss of a loved one, which verse would you choose? Why?

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## Thursday

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55.**

Take a walk by the cemetery. Read the obituaries in the paper. Watch the news. Notice how death is a real part of our life, and how we fight to avoid it. Although we struggle, we believe that Christ's work on Calvary and His victorious resurrection take the sting out of death. Find a practical way to keep this promise before you today. Write a verse out and leave it where you can see it.

## Friday

**Read Revelation 21:4, 5.**

As heart-wrenching as the Lazarus story is, even though Lazarus was raised to life, it was only long enough to see His Savior die on Calvary. Imagine how Lazarus must have felt as Jesus was being crucified. What was he thinking? What do you think Mary, Martha, and Lazarus will say in heaven about the seasons of grief they experienced?

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## this week's reading*

*The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 58; 59.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *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. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.