CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

NOVEMBER152025

Scripture Story: Luke 23:1-25.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 75-77.

trials



Photo by Colleen Cahill

keytext

"Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!'

. . . They were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed."

(Luke 23:20-23, NKJV)

flashlight

"Standing behind Pilate, in view of all in the court, Christ heard the abuse; but to all the false charges against Him He answered not a word. His whole bearing gave evidence of conscious innocence. He stood unmoved by the fury of the waves that beat about Him. It was as if the heavy surges of wrath, rising higher and higher, like the waves of the boisterous ocean, broke about Him, but did not touch Him. He stood silent, but His silence was eloquence. It was as a light shining from the inner to the outer man" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 726).

what do you think?

Rank the following emotions from the most extreme to the least (1—least extreme, 5—the most):

___ feeling hated
___ feeling alone
___ feeling betrayed
___ feeling abandoned by friends
___ feeling falsely accused

Describe the emotion you feel is most painful or extreme. Explain your answers.

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did you know?

The Sanhedrin was a 71-member supreme court comprised of scribes, rabbis, Pharisees, priests, Sadducees, and elders presided over by the high priest. The constitution of the Sanhedrin held by law: it could not convene at night—only by daylight and only in the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple courts. Also, you could condemn someone to death based only upon the testimony of two witnesses—never by their own testimony. Furthermore, a death sentence was never to be carried out on the same day as the trial or during the Passover, in order to give time for the court to make sure they were not making a big mistake. These rules were always strictly adhered to—except for one case.

INTO THE STORY

"Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.' Then Pilate asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' He answered him and said, 'It is as you say.' So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no fault in this Man.' But they were the more fierce, saying, 'He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.' When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. . . . Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, 'You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release Him' (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). And they all cried out at once, saying, 'Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas'—who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Then he said to them the third time, 'Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.' But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will."

(Luke 23:1-25, NKJV)

OUT OF THE STORY

For a step-by-step description of the six trials of Christ, read the following sequence:

1. Before Annas, John 18:12-23
2. Before Caiaphas and the elders, Mark 14:55-65
3. Before the Sanhedrin, Matthew 27:1, 2
4. Before Pilate, Luke 23:1-7
5. Before Herod, Luke 23:8-12
6. Before Pilate, Luke 23:13-25 (also John 18:28–19:45)

Circle the names of individuals and groups mentioned in the passage (Luke 23:1-25) that were part of the trials of Christ. Compare the attitudes of the religious leaders to those of Pilate and Herod. What do you know about these people, and what is revealed about them as Christ is tried?

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As you read through this portion of the trials, *underline* every phrase or sentence that conveys accusations or the stubborn intent to execute Jesus. How would you describe their mind-set as they try to convict Christ?

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What one verse or phrase seems to summarize the meaning of this event? Explain.

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Christ seems to be alone during His trials. What do you think was going through His mind? What thoughts kept Him so composed?

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What are some unanswered questions you wonder about as you read the story of Christ's trials?

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How do you think the trials are part of the plan of redemption? How are all the events that lead up to Calvary related to each other?

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punch lines

"Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.' But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.' . . . So from that day on they planned together to kill Him" **(John 11:47-50, 53, NASB).**

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?" **(Isaiah 53:7, 8, ESV).**

"A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed. If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days. The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you" **(Deuteronomy 19:15-19, NASB).**

further insight

"He suffered in proportion to the perfection of His holiness and His hatred of sin. His trial by men who acted as fiends was to Him a perpetual sacrifice."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 700

Sabbath

Read Isaiah 53.

Read and respond to the voting question in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. The trials of Christ demonstrate the supreme hatred that the Jewish leaders felt for Christ, the ambivalence of leaders such as Pilate and Herod, and the absence of the disciples and the loyalty of people who previously adored Jesus.

What is the greatest tragedy of the trials: the injustice, or the loneliness, or something else? Explain. According to Isaiah 53, what are the trials that Christ suffered in light of the plan of redemption?

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Sunday

Read John 11:47-53.

Read the *Into the Story* section and use the *Out of the Story* questions to guide your study. Take a moment to scan through the sequence of Christ's six trials and indicate which encounter was the most frustrating for you to read. Do the trials tend to stir up anger as well as sympathy? As you answered the questions in this week's lesson, what do you think is the message God has for you in the story?

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Monday

Read Luke 23:20-23.

The *Key Text* in this week's lesson conveys the conflict between what Pilate knew was right and the unbridled hatred of the Jewish leaders and the riotous crowd. Read the text and think of how you get torn between what is clearly right and what others want you to do that is wrong. Often, the everyday decisions we make are not as life-changing as Pilate's, but they are complicated. What specific areas of your life do you feel torn between right and wrong? Like Pilate, we all hear voices that pull at us. These voices come from inside as well as outside from others. Whom do you know that stands for what is good and true, no matter what they face? Ask them about the voices they hear and the voices they choose to listen to. Model their courage and make the decision ahead of time to stand.

Tuesday

Read Deuteronomy 19:15-19.

Read the quote from *The Desire of Ages* in the *Flashlight* section and try to imagine the scene. During high-pressure moments, such as the trial, everyone's colors are more clearly seen—including Christ's. Try to picture Christ the way Ellen White portrays Him in this passage. Think of some biblical characters who have made their stand. Notice how as they choose to be true, no matter what the result, their character shines clear. For Christ, this had to do with letting what was on the inside become visible on the outside. What part of your inner character do you want to show on the outside? Honesty? Kindness? Your devotion to God? Share with someone this week what is on the inside.

Wednesday

The *Punch Lines* texts in this week's lesson feature large portions of Scripture that relate specifically to Christ's trial or to the larger themes of truth and justice. Look for a couple of specific themes in the *Punch Lines:* identify a verse that speaks to you personally and offers a challenge for you to live differently, from the inside out. Identify a passage that informs your understanding of what happened to Christ in a way you might not have thought of before. Which verse of all the *Punch Lines* challenges you the most? Why?

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Thursday

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Clearly, Jesus was falsely accused and grossly mistreated. Christ is innocent, but humanity is guilty of sin. Paul states: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV). Write on a card or piece of paper the verdict: guilty or not guilty. Condemned to death or set free for eternity. Make a list of similar phrases that describe what Christ experienced and what you experience as a result. You will notice that such a list reminds you of what matters most. Place this paper or card out in the open where you can see it every day.

Friday

Read Isaiah 53:7, 8.

What do you think is the most God-honoring response to the way Christ was mistreated during His trials? Worship? Gratitude? Surrender? Belief? Devotion? Praise? Reflect and write out a prayer to God using one or more of the responses you feel are most relevant to you today.

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or (*Humble Hero*), chapters 75-77.

*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.