

JESUS BEFORE PILATE



Passage to Study: Matthew 27:1-31, Mark 15:1-20, Luke 23:1-25, John 18:28-40, 19:1-16.

Read with the class: Matthew 27:1, 2, 11-31.

Texts for memorization:

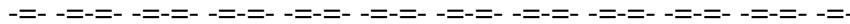
Younger: Matthew 27:22 "What shall I do...Christ?"

Older Matthew 27:22



OBJECTIVES: To Teach

1. That each child must make a decision about the Lord Jesus Christ, just as Pilate had to do.
2. That there can be different mistaken reasons given for not accepting Christ as Saviour.
3. That whatever the reason may be, putting off accepting the Lord Jesus is the same as rejecting Him.
4. What will be the eternal destiny of those who do not receive the Lord Jesus as Saviour.
5. That no imagined advantage whatever could make up for the eternal loss to the person who rejects Christ.



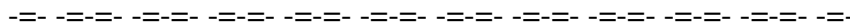
SCENE No. 1. The High Priest's House.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LESSON:

- The Lord was led bound from Gethsemane and taken to the house of the High Priest.
- Some members of the Council, (the Sanhedrin) were present with Caiaphas to begin a trial of the Lord Jesus, for they want it to seem to be legal.

Apl. It would have been better to be concerned about reality rather than appearances.

- However, they were already determined to put Him to death, seeking only the appearance of legality.
- The trial was carried out in a manner totally contrary to Jewish law.
 - They were not to meet at night, nor on a feast day.
 - They must not bribe the witnesses.
 - It was illegal to sentence a person the same day or night in which he was taken prisoner.
- Despite much effort, the Jewish leaders could find no real reason for putting Him to death. Many accusations were made, none of which proved to be true.
- Finally two witnesses agreed on something, that He had said He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days.
- The Lord Jesus said not a word in His own defense, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 53:7.
- In the end, the High Priest put Him under oath, (Leviticus 5:1) and Jesus acknowledged His deity.
- This resulted in Jesus being accused of blasphemy, without anyone investigating whether this might be true.
- His condemnation was based on the supposed blasphemy.
- The High Priest rent His clothes, a sign of great distress, but used falsely on this occasion.
- The religious trial ended with the religious leaders and the servants spitting, striking and mocking the Lord Jesus.
 - In the morning, the whole Council met to condemn the Lord to death and take Him before the Roman governor, for the Jews were not permitted to carry out a death sentence against their prisoners.



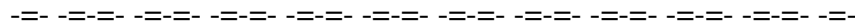
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SCENE No. 2. Pilate's Palace residence in Jerusalem.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LESSON:

- Still bound, Jesus is brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.
- Thus begins the most critical period of the life of Pilate.
- He is about to make a decision that will affect the remainder of his life.
- Although Pilate is in the place of Judge, the one who is being judged is really Pilate himself. His moral weakness and spiritual indifference are made very evident.
- The religious accusations are of no importance to the Romans, so the Jews present Pilate with political accusations against Jesus.
- They accuse Jesus of 1) being a rebel, 2) a threat to the Roman Emperor, and 3) one who advised the people not to pay taxes, and 4) who made Himself a King.
- The anger they feel against Jesus is really because He will NOT present Himself as a Liberator who would destroy the power of Rome and free the Jews from a foreign government.
- They imply that Pilate will be disloyal to Caesar if he sets Jesus free.
- Pilate questions Jesus who replies that yes, He is a King, but his kingdom is spiritual and not of this world.
- Despite His complete innocence Jesus does not defend Himself, thus fulfilling the words of Isaiah 53:7.
- The silence of this innocent man makes Pilate marvel.
- He declares that He finds in Him no fault at all, but he tries to avoid his responsibility. He ought to decide to set this innocent Man free.
- Instead, he sends Jesus to Herod, who along with his soldiers, mock the Lord .
- Sent back to Pilate, this governor is once again faced with the obligation of deciding what to do with Jesus.



SCENE No. 3. The Tribunal of Gabbatha, the Pavement or Elevated Place.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LESSON:

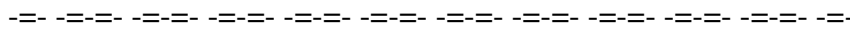
- Each of Pilate's weak attempts to set Jesus free has been frustrated by the Jews who insist that Jesus be put to death.
 - He makes another attempt to free Jesus, using the custom of setting free one prisoner at this annual feast.
 - He asks the people to choose between a notorious criminal, Barrabas, and the Lord Jesus.
 - Pilate perhaps would have wanted to follow the advice of his wife, but also wanted to please the Jews, fearing he would lose His position of governor if he displeased them.
 - Influenced by their religious leaders, the people choose Barrabas.
 - Faced with another failure to have the multitude decide to do what is correct and set Jesus free, and unwilling to decide this against their will, Pilate asks, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"
 - The people respond with their cry, "Let Him be crucified."
 - Three times in all, Pilate declares that he finds no fault in Him.
 - Fearing the loss of his position and authority, Pilate gives up any attempt to free Jesus, calls for water and washes his hands.
- Cns.** Water could never cleanse him of responsibility for such a mistaken and unjust decision.
- Pilate sets Barrabas free; anarchy has won the day and continues to reign from that time forward.

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Cns. In today's world, the King of Righteousness continues to be rejected and that which is corrupt is valued.

- Pilate orders that Jesus be scourged and delivers Him to be crucified.
- The soldiers take Jesus and mock Him. Dressing Him in a scarlet robe, and crowning Him with thorns, they salute Him as if they were saluting a King.
- Still dressed in the scarlet robe, His body showing the effects of the scourging, He is presented to the people ("Behold the Man"), perhaps in the hope that they would feel some compassion for Him.
- The colour of the robe they put on Him represents that of our sin (Isaiah 1:18) which was put upon Him so that we might be dressed in a robe of righteousness.
- He was made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13), for a curse had been pronounced against every one that should hang upon a tree, and He wore the crown of thorns, the product of an earth that had been cursed in Genesis 3.
- Our sins were the cause of that curse.



SCENE No. 4. Application.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LESSON:

Note: In order to illustrate the lessons being taught, here are some suggestions for flannelgraph.

- The word DECISIONS placed across a picture of the globe of earth can represent the idea that life is made up of a world of decisions that must be made.
 - Different pictures can be found to represent the things that attract young people, and present them with the decision:
 - to live for the present moment? Or ...
 - to deny oneself now, in view of a future benefit?
 - There are many possible examples of bad decisions.
 - Some decide to take out loans in order to enjoy some momentary pleasure. Some have been ruined by similar bad decisions.
 - A STOP sign tells us not to proceed, a command that is intended for our safety and benefit. Do we pay attention to the STOP signs of life?
 - God calls the sinner to STOP and not continue on the road to destruction.
 - In every Sunday School and Gospel Meeting, as the gospel is preached, every unconverted person must, as Pilate did, come to some decision.
 - Not to decide to accept the Lord Jesus is to reject Him as Pilate did.
 - This is the most important decision of our life on earth.
- Everything else will pass away, but the Word of God will not pass away.