
Lesson 50

Judas' End

The Scripture Lesson

John 19:13-16; Matthew 27:3-10

At last Pilate sat down in the judgment seat to give his sentence against Jesus. He will condemn Jesus to death.

So the chief priests will get their way yet after all. This made the governor angry. Before giving his sentence, therefore, he mocked the Jews. He said, "Behold your King." And when they began again to shout, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him," Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your *King*?" All these years you wretched Jews have been looking for a king to deliver you from all your enemies; and now that you at last *have* one, you want to *kill* him? What in the world is the matter with you?

And then the lying chief priests, who actually *hated* the Roman emperor, said, We have no king but Caesar. What they were really saying was, Don't talk to *us* about a King, about a Messiah; we don't want any. We want to serve Caesar.

Then Pilate wrote the death sentence for Jesus. His verdict, remember, was that Jesus is *innocent*; but he nevertheless condemns Him to death in order to save his own job. He gave his soldiers orders to take the scarlet robe from Jesus and to put on Him again His own clothes. And then they led Him away to be crucified.

Judas, meanwhile, was finding that he could

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not be happy with the thirty pieces of silver that the chief priests had given him. He had betrayed an innocent man. He was a traitor. Not even *wicked* people like traitors. Judas himself began to hate his own deed. He hated it so much, in fact, that he wanted to get rid of those thirty pieces of silver. So back he went to the chief priests. "I have sinned," he said, "in that I have betrayed innocent blood."

Innocent blood? The chief priests did not care about that. Nor did they care about Judas. He had already done his part, and they had paid him for it, so they were through with him. "What is that to us?" they ask. "See thou to that."

But Judas refused to keep the money. He hurried toward the sanctuary of the temple and took those thirty pieces of silver and threw them with all his might into the holy place.

Still, however, God gave this wicked man no rest. For Judas, you see, was not at all sorry for his sin. He did not repent as *Peter* did. Peter's was a *godly* sorrow that works repentance unto salvation. But Judas' was not. He was sorry only about the *consequences* of his sin. The "sorrow of the world," the Bible tells us, "worketh death." And that certainly was the case with Judas. He did not pray to God for forgiveness. He did not weep because of the greatness of his sin. Instead

he hurried out of the city and went and hanged himself so that he died.

Already was it clear that Jesus' words concerning the traitor were true. "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him," Jesus had told His disciples, "but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."

The Crucifixion

Luke 23:26-31; John 19:17-24

After Pilate condemned Jesus to death, the soldiers prepared at once to lead Him away to be crucified. As they usually did with criminals, the soldiers made Jesus carry His own cross. The cross was made of two heavy beams of wood. To carry it, therefore, was very hard. For Jesus it was especially hard because of everything that He had gone through that night. He did manage to carry the cross part of the way to Calvary, but finally He was too weak to continue. The soldiers grabbed a man by the name of Simon, of Cyrene, who happened to be passing by, and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross the rest of the way.

When they came to the place of crucifixion, the soldiers began at once to set up the cross of Jesus. Other soldiers did the same with the crosses of two robbers who were to be crucified at the same time. Each of the three men would be nailed to a cross, through his hands and his feet, and then left there to suffer till he died.

Crucifixion was a very painful death. To make the pain a little easier to bear, a wine mixed with myrrh was offered to those who were about to be crucified. That wine was offered to Jesus, too. But when He tasted it, and knew what it was, He would not drink it. Jesus, you see, was not dragged there against His will, as were the two criminals. He went to Calvary for *us* — for all of His people. God had "laid on him the iniquity of us all." Jesus would carry that iniquity away by laying down His life for His sheep. He did not want anything that would make His mind less conscious of the hurt. He wanted to face, willingly, consciously, all the terrible suffering of the crucifixion, and all the

far worse suffering of bearing the wrath of God ... for our sins.

After they had nailed Jesus to the cross, the soldiers attached to the cross, above Jesus' head, a small board with some writing on it. The writing was, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." Pilate knew very well that the chief priests tried to *deny* that Jesus was King. He put this title on the cross only to make them angry. And they *were* angry. They tried to get Pilate to change the writing; but he would not change a single word. So the title stayed; and it told the truth to all that passed by. For Jesus *was* King, and He was being put to death on the cross, not for any crime that He had committed, but because He was the King of the Jews.

After their work was finished, the soldiers took Jesus' clothes and divided them among themselves. There were four soldiers, and they cast lots to see who would get the sandals, who would get the head covering, and so on. But they purposely left the coat till last. This was a beautiful and expensive piece of clothing and the soldiers wanted to deal with it separately. They decided that it would be a shame to cut it into four pieces, so they cast lots, in order that *one* of them might have the whole coat.

Hardly anyone noticed what the soldiers did. But it was the exact fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. For in the psalms we read, "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." How clear it is that at Calvary, as everywhere, all things were in God's hand.

Memory Work

Group A

Galatians 3:13 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

Group B

Isaiah 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

ACTIVITIES

This paper has been prepared in the hope that it will be used by students of all ages. The activities are designed so that the oldest will be challenged, and the youngest will find some of it within reach. Parents should encourage their children to attempt only what they can handle without frustration. For some that will be much, for others little.

DO YOU AGREE?

If you do, write Yes; if you do not, write No.

_____ 1. When Pilate at last asked the Jews, "Shall I crucify your *King*?" the Jews explained that they wanted a Messiah who would help them fight against Caesar.

_____ 2. When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he was ashamed that he had betrayed his Master.

_____ 3. So much did Judas regret his own treachery, that he decided to return the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests.

_____ 4. The chief priests tried to comfort Judas, and they thanked him for returning the money.

_____ 5. Judas, however, could not be comforted, so he went to the temple and there he hanged himself.

_____ 6. Before the soldiers led Jesus from the judgment hall, Pilate ordered a man by the name of Simon to carry Jesus' cross.

_____ 7. Before He was nailed to the cross, Jesus was offered a drink of wine mingled with myrrh.

_____ 8. Above Jesus' head His accusation was written, in Hebrew, Roman, and Latin.

_____ 9. The leaders of the Jews did not like the accusation as it was written, so they demanded the soldiers to change it.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER READERS

1. From the beginning to the end of the trial of Jesus, the chief priests lied to Pilate. Can you tell how their cry, "We have no king but Caesar," was also a barefaced lie?

2. What was the judgment of Pilate concerning all of the charges brought against Jesus? (That is, did

he say, "Guilty," or "Innocent"?) Why did Pilate condemn an innocent man to death?

3. How did Judas begin to feel about his betrayal of Jesus when he saw that Jesus was condemned? What did he decide to do with the 30 pieces of silver?

4. What did Judas tell the chief priests? How did the chief priests treat Judas? What did Judas then do with the money?

5. On the way to Golgotha the Roman soldiers forced another man to carry Jesus' cross. Who was that man?

6. What kind of drink was Jesus offered before the soldiers nailed Him to the cross? Can you explain why Jesus would not drink it?

7. What did Pilate write on the board above Jesus' head? What change did the chief priests want to make in the title that Pilate had written?

8. What did the soldiers do with the clothing that they took from Jesus? Why did they decide to deal with the coat separately?

COMPLETING SENTENCES

1. Persuaded at last that he could do nothing to break the determination of the Jews that Jesus die, and unwilling to risk his own career in the interests of justice, Pilate at last brought _____ forth and sat down in the _____ seat in order to pronounce the sentence. However, angered by the Jews' victory in this test of wills, Pilate tried first to even the score as best he could by insulting the Jews. "Behold your _____!" he jeered. And the Jews, afraid that Pilate was yet undecided, shouted frantically, "_____ with him, _____ with him, _____ him." Enjoying the Jews' discomfort, Pilate continued to provoke them.

“Shall I _____ your *king*?” he asked in pretended surprise. Pilate has his revenge. For the Jews are driven by his mockery to a fury almost beyond belief. Not only do they reject *Jesus* as the Messiah, but they declare that they do not want any part of a Messiah at all, ever. “We have no _____ but _____,” they shout (John 19:13-15).

2. Satisfied that he had at least succeeded in riling up the Jews, Pilate at last gave sentence. Nothing at all had come to light that would give reason for a change in Pilate’s verdict that Jesus was innocent, but Pilate nevertheless condemns Him to death, according to the desire of the Jews. Orders were given to a detachment of Roman soldiers to carry out this sentence, and they proceeded at once to take the _____ from Him, and put His own _____ back on Him, and lead Him away to _____ Him (Matt. 27:31).

3. Judas Iscariot, meanwhile, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, _____ himself concerning the part that he had played in the apprehension of Jesus. Whereas before he had coveted the reward promised him by the chief priests for betraying Jesus to them, he now hated the very sight of those thirty pieces of silver. Now, after the deed is committed, he is tormented by an evil conscience for having betrayed one whom he knew full well to be innocent of every charge brought against Him. He therefore brought again the _____ pieces of silver to the chief priests, saying, “I have _____ in that I have _____ the _____ blood” (Matt. 27:3, 4).

4. But the Sanhedrists have no time anymore for the likes of Judas. Earlier, they had treated him like a worthy confederate; but now that he had served their evil purposes, they care not in the least for his distress. “What is that to us?” they ask, “see _____ to that.” Judas, however, is determined to rid himself of that money, so he rushed toward the open entrance into the Holy Place and _____ down the thirty pieces

of silver. He then hurried away, out of the temple and out of the city, and went and _____ himself (Matt. 27:4, 5).

5. The chief priests were then left to determine what to do with the pieces of silver picked up from the sanctuary floor. In typical, hypocritical concern for the letter of the law, these men decide that they ought not put the money into the temple _____, because it was the price of _____. The result of their scrupulosity was that they unwittingly brought about still another fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. They decided to use the money for charitable purposes. They took _____ and bought a plot of land known as the _____ field, in order to use it for a burying place for _____, that is, for nonresidents who happened to die in Jerusalem (Matt. 27:6, 7).

6. The prophecy thus fulfilled is found in Zechariah 11:12, 13. The prophet of the Lord there goes to the princes of Israel and asks that they give him the reward they thought fitting for his labors among them. In response they _____ for his price _____ pieces of silver. A paltry sum that was. And the Lord will not accept it. “Cast it unto the _____,” the Lord said; and He adds ironically, “a _____ price that I was _____ at of them.” Let them, in other words, use the money to pay the potter for making a few bricks for the temple they so delight in. Zechariah therefore took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the _____ in the _____ of the Lord.

All of this, as we learn from Matthew, was meant to be prophetic — prophetic of the price at which the leaders of the Jews of Jesus’ day would value the Servant of the Lord, a sum that was fit for little else than to be given to a potter. The literal fulfillment of these prophecies was added evidence that the redemption of the Israel of God was being accomplished in the way of carnal Israel’s rejection of the Messiah.

7. The Bible records for us two incidents that occurred on the way from Pilate's judgment hall to the place of the crucifixion. The first had to do with the carrying of the cross. Jesus must have started out carrying His own cross, since that was customarily demanded of condemned men. Jesus may, however, have reached a point where He was physically unable to carry the load; for we read that, as they came _____ (that is, out of the city), they found a man of _____, Simon by name; and him they _____ to bear the cross (Matt. 27:32). The Roman soldiers considered it beneath their dignity to carry a cross, and to the Jews the cross was accursed; so there would be no *volunteers* to take the load. Hence the necessity of *compelling* someone — someone who happened to be passing by, coming out of the _____ (Mark 15:21). Mark's mention of two of Simon's sons, _____ and _____, suggests that this unexpected encounter with Jesus may have led to Simon's conversion.

8. The pathetic figure of Jesus on the road to Golgotha apparently aroused the sympathy of some of the women of Jerusalem, for, as they followed, they bewailed and _____ Him. The truth is, however, that mere *pity* is not an appropriate response to the sufferings of *Christ*. One ought rather to consider the *cause* — and then shed tears that come out of a sorrow for *sin*. And these women saw none of that. Jesus therefore *rebukes* them. "Daughters of _____" He calls them. Daughters of *apostate* Jerusalem they are, and mothers of the Jerusalem which, some 40 years later, would be made to feel the judgment of God in the terrible destruction of their city by the Romans. So terrible would those days be that barrenness, long considered in Israel to be a curse, would actually be counted a blessing. "Weep not for _____," Jesus said to these women, "but weep for _____ and for your _____. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, _____ are the barren Then shall they begin to say to

the mountains, _____ on us; and to the hills, _____ us" (Luke 23:27-31).

9. On arrival at Golgotha (a Hebrew word indicating a place of a _____), Jesus was at once offered _____ to drink mingled with _____. This drink was a doped wine, the effect of which would be to deaden the sense of pain, and even of consciousness itself. Jesus, however, had come to this place for the express purpose of consciously shedding His blood — that is, in full awareness of all the suffering. So, though Jesus was no doubt already very thirsty, when He _____ the vinegar and knew what effect it would have on His sensibility to the awful pain of crucifixion and the bearing of God's wrath, He would not _____ (Matt. 27:33, 34).

10. After they nailed Jesus to the cross, only one duty yet remained for the soldiers, and that was to set up, over His head, a small board on which His _____ was written (Matt. 27:37). _____ himself wrote the title: "Jesus of Nazareth, the _____ of the Jews." It was written in Hebrew and _____ and _____. All who passed by could therefore read the only real charge that the Jews had against this man on the cross (John 19:19, 20).

11. The chief priests were irritated by this superscription. They hurried back to the Praetorium to insist that Pilate change the wording — to "He _____, I am the King of the Jews." Pilate, however, would this time not budge an inch. He had in fact worded it the way he did exactly in order to provoke the anger of the Jews. So he dismissed them with a simple "What I have _____ I have _____." In God's providence, therefore, the superscription was left to say the truth about Jesus; for He was indeed the true, spiritual King of Israel (John 19:21, 22).

12. Their task finished, the soldiers divided among themselves the _____ which they had removed from Jesus, casting _____ upon them to determine what each man should

_____ (Mark 15:24). Thus did they quickly dispose of the robe, girdle, sandals, and head covering. There was a fifth article of clothing that, because of its exceptional value, was set aside from the beginning in order that it might be dealt with separately. This was the _____, or tunic, which was without _____, woven from the top _____. The soldiers therefore said among themselves, "Let us not _____ it, but cast _____ for it, whose it shall be" (John 19:23, 24).

13. This activity of the soldiers probably attracted little attention. But it was an amazingly literal fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. Speaking as a type of the Messiah, David likened his own persecutors to men who would raffle off the clothing of their victim. By inspiration of the Spirit he thus foretold precisely what would happen on Calvary. "They part my _____ (the four articles of clothing) among them, and cast _____ on my _____ (the tunic)" (Ps. 22:18).

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Earlier in the trial Pilate had said to the Jews, "Behold the man!" (John 19:5). Now at the end of the trial, when he sits down at last in the judgment seat, Pilate says, "Behold your King!" (John 19:15). Though the words are much the same, Pilate very likely had something quite different in mind in the one instance than he did in the other. Do you see the difference? Can you tell from the verses following each exclamation whether Pilate accomplished what he wanted?

2. Would the chief priests, in any circumstances other than this trial of Jesus before Pilate, ever have said, "We have no king but Caesar"? What do they reveal about themselves here?

3. Can you show that Pilate's *sentence* (Luke 23:24) did not follow at all from his *verdict*? What does he reveal about himself here?

4. We read that Judas, *when he saw that Jesus was condemned*, repented himself (Matt. 27:3). Judas had, however, betrayed Jesus to the chief priests knowing full well that they wanted to kill Him. How

then can we account for his great regret after he saw the outcome?

5. Real repentance is a *good* thing. David repented. Peter repented. Read II Corinthians 7:10. Can you show from the *actions* of Judas, as compared to those of David and Peter, that the sorrow of Judas was not one that "worketh repentance to salvation"?

6. The chief priests and elders were the spiritual leaders of Israel. When Judas came to them and said, "I have sinned," they answered, "What is that to us?" Later, after they picked up the 30 pieces of silver from the temple floor, they said, "It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood." What do those two responses of the Sanhedrists, taken together, tell about the kind of leadership they were providing for Israel?

7. In the crowd that followed Jesus on the way to Golgotha were women of Jerusalem who "bewailed and lamented" Him. There are many today, too, who feel sorry for Jesus. They have pity for Him. Why is pity, by itself, not a proper response to the sufferings of Christ?

8. In Jesus' rebuke of these women, He warned them that evil days were ahead for Jerusalem. To what days did Jesus refer?

9. As soon as He arrived at Golgotha, Jesus was offered vinegar to drink mingled with gall. We read that "when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink" (Matt. 27:34). Would Jesus have drunk the vinegar (a cheap wine) if it had not been mixed with gall?

10. Why, do you suppose, were the chief priests so concerned about Pilate's wording of the superscription: "Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews"? That is, if they were so sure that Jesus was not the Messiah, then why did not they just laugh at the superscription, since they already had Jesus where they wanted Him?

11. Do you see any significance in the fact that, through the superscription, the Kingship of Christ was proclaimed in three different languages?

12. John writes that the soldiers' casting lots over Jesus' clothing was a fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. In that psalm (specifically also in that *verse*) David was in fact writing about *himself*. How then can Psalm 22:18 be, as John by the Spirit declares that it is, a Messianic prophecy?