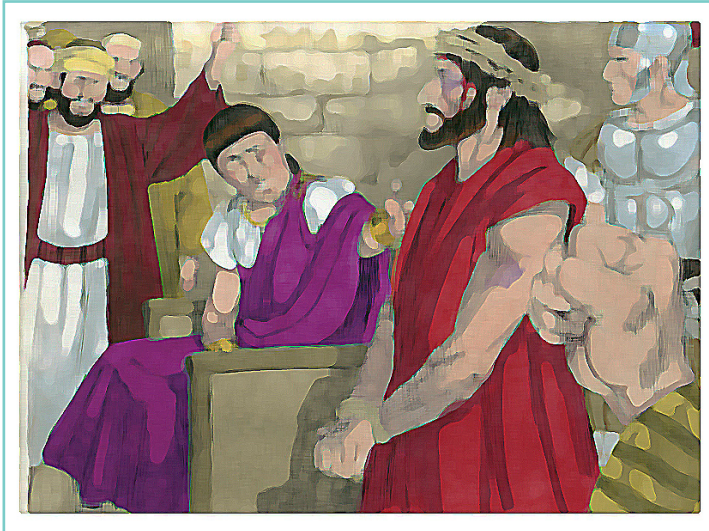


Lesson 7: Injustice



Introduction

Jesus was brought to stand trial before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, as the religious made accusations against him. Pilate tried to avoid the issue by allowing the crowd to set a prisoner free. But when the crowd was offered a choice between Jesus and the criminal Barabbas, things did not go as Pilate expected.

Read: Matthew 27:11-26

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

The crucifixion story comes near the end of each Gospel.

The New Testament: Crucifixion

The religious authorities brought Jesus to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, for trial. Pilate gave in to the angry shouts of the crowd and sentenced the innocent Jesus to be crucified. At Golgotha ("the Place of the Skull"), Jesus gave his life for the sins of the world.

Biblical Background

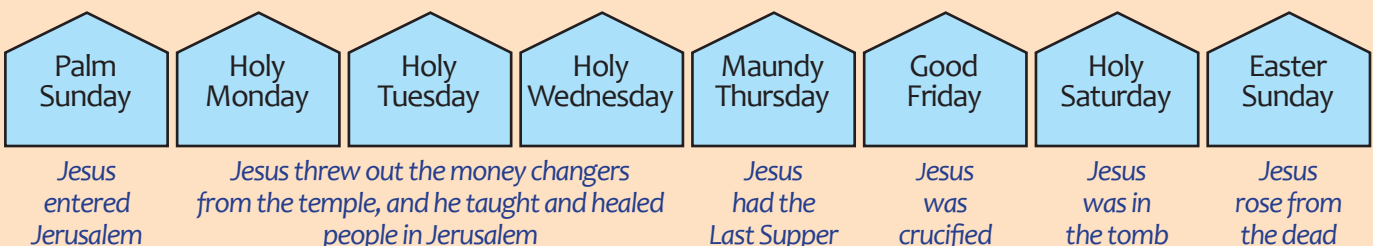
In today's story, we get a look into how the trial of Jesus unfolded. There was pressure from the religious authorities to have him killed, and the priest and the scribes stirred up the crowd. Scripture says: "In his humiliation justice was denied him." This is no more clear than in the contrast between the righteous Jesus and the murderous Barabbas. The innocent was condemned and the guilty was set free.

The crucifixion of Jesus was the act by which Jesus took upon himself the penalty for our sins and sacrificed his own life so that would have life — a new relationship with God, by the forgiveness of our sins.

When in Time?

Every year in church, we observe Holy Week, referring to the week between Palm Sunday and Easter. On those special days, we remember the events that took place in the last week of Jesus' life — how he was put to death on the cross and rose again on the third day.

What was the day of Jesus' death (the first day)? _____ What was the third day? _____



Discuss: Matthew 27:11-26

1. The chief priests had already decided to kill Jesus (Matthew 26:66); why did they need to take him to Pontius Pilate? (See John 18:31-32 for a hint.)
2. When asked by Pilate, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus responded, "You have said so." What did Jesus mean by this? How did Pilate's own words here hold him accountable for what he was about to do?
3. The Passover festival was the most important holiday of the year for the Jewish people. Why do you think it was a custom for the Roman Governor to release a prisoner at this festival?
4. The Bible says that Barabbas was a murderer (Luke 23:19) and a "robber" (John 18:40). This biblical word actually means "rebel" or "insurrectionist." How were his actual crimes similar to what Jesus was being falsely charged with?
5. What message did Pilate's wife send to her husband? Have you ever had a dream that you understood to be a warning? Can God use dreams to send us a messages like this?
6. Why do you think there were so many in the crowd who wanted Jesus to be crucified? How much did the chief priest have to do with that? When have you seen mobs stirred up against someone falsely? Why does this happen especially online?
7. When a person says, "I wash my hands of this" — it means they no longer want anything to do with it and refuse to take blame. To what degree does Pilate deserve the blame for Jesus' death? How do we all?
8. Read Psalm 94:14-22. In times when it seems that everyone has turned against us, what promise do we have in the Lord? How does faith in God give us confidence in the face of hate from the crowd?

Where in the World?

The map to the right shows an overhead view of the city of Jerusalem as it was in Jesus' day. Some important locations are marked.

Fill in the blanks below based in information you see on the map.

- a) The Roman Governor was headquartered on the north side of the city in a stronghold known as _____ Fortress.
- b) The Garden of Gethsemane was located beyond the walls on the _____ side of the city, overlooking the _____.
- c) The place where Jesus was taken out to be crucified was on the _____ side of the city.

