

could accept the gift. Both were mistaken. Guilt cannot be bought or sold, divided or multiplied, given or accepted. It belongs with sin, and is inseparable from sin, except as almighty forgiveness separates them. Only God can remove that burden. Many of these

people afterwards sought and found the favor of God, and loved Jesus to the end of their lives. Pilate, if tradition can be trusted, perished miserably as a suicide. He might have been saved if he had come to God in penitence and faith.

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

This Lesson takes up the second part of Jesus' trial, that before Pilate. Take this as introducing the Lesson, "The Sanhedrin could condemn, but it could not execute a criminal. That was reserved either with or without a new trial for the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate. In order to bring about a trial by this Roman it was necessary to formulate a charge that merited death under Roman law. That upon which Jesus had just been condemned would no more have stood in the court of Pilate than that against Paul with Gallio in Corinth." Bring out:

1. *That the charge preferred against Jesus was that of attempted rebellion, Luke 23:2.* Discuss: (a) The depth of their duplicity. They had substituted "king of the Jews" for "Christ" for Pilate's benefit, thereby giving a political aspect to what was a question of religion, trying to make it appear that Jesus was a rival of Caesar. (b) Pilate's examination and Jesus' confession. See John 18:29-31 for motive in the question. Make clear that notwithstanding Jesus' confession Pilate declares Him innocent and acquits Him. Trace the succeeding steps, renewed accusation (Matt. 27:12-14; Mark 15:3-5; Luke 23:5), Pilate sends Jesus to Herod (Luke 23:6-12), second acquittal and proposed release by Pilate, Luke 23:13-16. Give full emphasis to these facts as completely establishing the innocence of Jesus and the desire of Pilate to release Him. From a legal point of view the false charges had broken down entirely and Jesus stood innocent before His enemies.

2. *The sacrifice of Jesus to priestly hate, Matt. 27:15-25.* Take each step in the movement, dealing with its moral implications. First, the conviction of Pilate that

Jesus is innocent and his eagerness to release Him without offending the Jews. Go on to notice his hopeless appeal to the mob. Second, the conduct of Pilate in handing Jesus uncondemned to the priests to be abused, and his final condemnation of Jesus simply to protect himself against accusations at Rome.

Now emphasize the main lines of teaching. Jesus was rejected because He exposed sin. Is that the reason why sinners reject Him now? Can you give any valid reason for rejecting Him? The responsibility for His rejection carried awful results. Are you prepared to accept the consequences of rejecting Him?

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

Recall the trial of Jesus by the Jews who condemned Him to death for blasphemy, Matt. 26:57-66. Why did they not proceed to carry out their sentence? Their Roman rulers had deprived them of this power. What could they do? They must get a sentence of death against Jesus in a Roman court. The following plan will bring out the incidents in to-day's Lesson:

1. *Christ Before Pilate, vs. 11-14.* Direct attention to the incidents in the other Gospels, and bring out the new charge of treason preferred against the prisoner (see Luke 23:2). Why did they not adhere to the charge of blasphemy? Blasphemy was not a criminal offence in the eyes of the Romans. Jesus was silent when speech could serve no good purpose. Remind the class that there are times in every life when silence is golden. Why did Pilate send Jesus to Herod? (See Luke 23:6-11.) With what result? Dwell upon the fact that both Pilate and Herod believed the prisoner innocent. They could find no fault in Him. What fault has the world ever found in Jesus? Bring out that His is the only faultless life in the world's history.