

SIX DAYS BEFORE JESUS' DEATH

(9th of Nisan, comparable to our Thursday sundown to Friday sundown)

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON

Note: This lesson is the first in a series of six stories discussing the last six days of Jesus' life on earth before He was crucified. Imagine knowing one was going to die and yet Christ did the "Will of His Father" up to the very last moment! His example can be our goal as well as we make ready for the Spring Holy Days.

Say-Welcome to Sabbath School class, let's bow our head and ask God for His guidance as we study together today. We will also find out what we have in common with a tax collector named, Zacchaeus.

Say-It was six days before Jesus' death and He was 33 ½ years old. It was the springtime of the year of 31 A. D. and it was Passover (not Easter) time in Jerusalem. The Hebrew calendar called the month Nisan (called Abib in pre-Babylonian captivity) and we know it as March or April.

Say-At Passover time, thousands of people made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and brought with them thousands of lambs to be sacrificed. All of their homes had been thoroughly cleansed of leavening, (symbolic of sin) and throughout the city, unleavened bread was prepared for the seven Days of Unleavened Bread which followed Passover.

Say-But what was Jesus doing, what was He thinking six days before His death? What would you be thinking? The Bible tells us in the book of Luke, Jesus passed through Jericho, a city outside of Jerusalem (and today is located in what is called the West Bank of Palestine) teaching the message of God. We can learn a great deal from the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus; it is a lesson He taught for all of us.

Say- Zacchaeus was a Jewish man who lived in Jericho and he was a tax collector. Zacchaeus, like all the tax collectors, wasn't very well liked; in fact, among his Jewish people, he was called a traitor. Zacchaeus cheated the people by overcharging them and he had become very wealthy by keeping the extra money for himself. Luke 19:2

Say-However, Zacchaeus heard Jesus was coming through the city of Jericho and sure enough, one day, up ahead he could see a large crowd gathering. It was true; Jesus really had come to Jericho! Zacchaeus was a very short man and he was worried he would not

be able to see Jesus so up high he climbed to the top of a sycamore tree, (an Egyptian fig tree), where he would surely get a glimpse of Jesus. Luke 19:3.

Say-You see, Zacchaeus was seeking Jesus more than just physically seeing Him. He wanted to know Him spiritually. Jesus, surrounded by the crowd, continued to walk towards the sycamore tree and He was getting closer and closer. Jesus got right underneath the tree and looked up at Zacchaeus. Do you think Zacchaeus' heart was pounding? Luke 19:5

Say-Then Jesus called to him by name. The Bible says, "He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out (of sin)", John 10:3. Is that what God has done for us also, did He call your name and lead us out of the world of sin? You see everyone goes through the same process for the Bible says, "No man can come unto Me except the Father draw (call) him", John 6:44; this is what we have in common with Zacchaeus.

Say-Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, hurry, (desire me earnestly) come down from the tree; for today it is necessary for Me to stay at your house", Luke 19:5. We will find out why it was so necessary. Why was Zacchaeus, the sinner, traitor and corrupt tax collector, so joyous about this news?

Say-The Bible tells us, "...Jesus knows the heart of man...", Luke 16:15 and Zacchaeus wanted to know Jesus spiritually, he wanted to have eternal life. God knows our hearts also; we must seek Him sincerely every day with our heart mind and soul, Luke 10:27!

Say-But what about the crowd that day; were they happy Jesus was going home with Zacchaeus? No, they were angry and began to yell nasty things at Christ. They said, "He is a cheater, he is a thief, he is a sinner". "Look at that, Jesus stays with sinners". All the yelling and name calling did not stop Jesus.

Say-Many people today are just like the people in this crowd when they do not like someone. They say, "Get out of my way" or "I have no time for you". But do you see how Christ treated someone everyone hated? Remember Christ said, "Love your enemies, and do good, hoping for nothing and your reward shall be great, for you shall be the children of the Highest: for He (God) is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil", Luke 6:35. Christ should be our example don't you think?

Say-You see, Zacchaeus was joyous meeting Jesus because He had

changed his life. Zacchaeus recognized the true riches and he was willing to give up all he had to follow Christ. In repentance to God he said, "All that I have cheated I will pay back four times what I owe them and all that I have I will give half to the poor", Luke 19:8.

Say-Now we know one of the things Jesus did six days before He died; He changed someone's life for the better. To Zaccaeus, once a sinner and under the death penalty, Christ said, "This day salvation is come to this house", Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus, like all of God's people, was joyous because now he had the promise of eternal life, vs. 6. Let's continue to tell the world how they can become a follower of Jesus and have eternal life. (Note: This is a good place to stop if you are instructing young children and go to the Memory Verse and "Tot" lesson.)

Say-But Jesus' day wasn't over, later that evening, Jesus told a story called the "Parable of the Pounds". It is a parable about what God has given us, both physically and spiritually, and how it is to be used to serve God and others in finishing His work on earth until He returns and sets up His Kingdom, Luke 19:13.

Note: (In the NT, a pound is a weight and sum of money equal to 100 drachmae, one talent was 100 pounds, a pound equaled 10 1/3 oz. (300 gm).

Say-The "King" in the parable represented God and the "servants" represented each of us, His followers. The king gave each one ten pounds and said, "Occupy till I come", or "Carry on with the work of God until I return", Luke 19:13. "Be diligent about it, be watchful, work out your own salvation together and produce good fruits".

Say-And while I am gone, "Love your neighbor as yourself" and "...if you want life, keep My commandments", Proverbs 7:2, Matthew 19:17. Let's see how the servants did and see which servant you are like or would want to be like.

Say-Some of the servants said, "He is not going to have authority over me". These servants are symbolic of the "Enemies of God", Luke 19:27. They hate God's laws and His message and say, "He is not going to tell me what to do, I am my own boss, I want to be free". Have we ever heard anyone speak and think like this before? What does God tell us about this way of thinking?

Say-God tells us, "But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty,

and continues therein, he being not (only a) hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed”, Js. 1:25.

Say-Another servant was very faithful while the king was away. The king said, “Now you can reign over ten cities”, vs. 17. This servant is symbolic of doing the work of God and producing Godly fruit and equally so for the second servant, vs. 19. The third servant came and said, “Here is your pound, I kept it laid up in a napkin”. Oops!

Say-Many people are in this category and yet consider themselves followers of God or Christians. They are falsely taught and believe that “There is nothing one must do to be saved”, that “Christ did it all for me”. What does Christ say about this false concept?

Say-As the parable continues, God tells us the consequences of this behavior. He says, “...That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him”. You see they produced no fruit and God is saying they are worthless to Him, Luke 19:26, 27.

Say-But Christ had more things to do six days before His death. He went on to Jerusalem and found His disciples and gave them instructions that they were to find a donkey colt for Him to ride on when He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem for the Passover, Matthew 21:1-7.

Say-While in Jerusalem Jesus saw merchants doing business in the Temple of God. They had changed the Temple of God, God's dwelling place, and the Holy place of worship, into a place of business, Matthew 21:12-16. He drove them out because they were corrupting His Temple. Then He went on to Bethany where He raised Lazarus from the dead, John 12:1. It had been a very busy day!

MEMORY VERSE

JESUS KNOWS THE HEART OF MAN...

LUKE 16:15

HE IS KIND UNTO THE UNTHANKFUL AND TO
THE EVIL,

LUKE 6:35

MEMORY VERSE FOR TOTS

JESUS KNOWS THE HEART...LUKE 16:15

Below are the memory verses to be cut out and placed with the Bible picture provided for the Sabbath School notebooks

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JESUS KNOWS THE HEART OF MAN...

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JESUS KNOWS THE HEART...

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Below is the Bible Story for tots

CHRIST AND ZACCHAEUS

IT WAS SIX DAYS BEFORE JESUS' DEATH AND
IN JERUSALEM, PASSOVER WAS SOON TO BE;
WHEN MANY WORSHIPPERS BROUGHT THEIR
LAMBS AS SACRIFICED THEY WOULD BE.

JESUS WOULD PASS THROUGH JERICHO ON HIS
WAY TO THE PASSOVER YOU SEE;
SO ZACCHAEUS, A SHORT, SHORT MAN WAITED
FOR HIM HIGH UP IN A SYCAMORE TREE. LK. 19:4

JESUS "KNOWS THE HEART OF EVERY MAN" AND
TO ZACCHAEUS HE CALLED OUT TO HIM; LK. 16:15
"HURRY, COME DOWN, COME DOWN; FOR YOU
THE PROMISE OF SALVATION BEGINS"!

ZACCHAEUS HAD BEEN A TAX COLLECTOR, AND
THROUGH CHEAT AND DECEIT HE WAS
WEALTHY INDEED; LK. 19:2
BUT THROUGH JESUS, ZACCHAEUS RECOGNIZED
TRUE RICHES, NOW HE WOULD HELP THOSE IN
NEED. By B. R. B

JESUS KNOWS THE HEART...
LUKE 16:15

*Zacchaeus, hurry, (desire me earnestly)
come down from the tree... this
day salvation has come to this house.*

Luke 19:1-10



*He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out (of sin).
John 10:3*