



easter week

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HOPE AND NEW LIFE



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DAY 1

Sunday

On the Sunday before His death, Jesus began his trip to Jerusalem, knowing that soon he would lay down his life for our sins. Nearing the village of Bethphage He sent two of His disciples ahead, telling them to look for a donkey and its unbroken colt. The disciples were instructed to untie the animals and bring them to him.

Then Jesus sat on the young donkey and slowly, humbly, made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, fulfilling the ancient prophecy:

“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” - Zechariah 9:9

The crowds welcomed him by waving palm branches in the air and shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

On Palm Sunday, Jesus and his disciples spent the night in Bethany, a town about two miles east of Jerusalem. This is where Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, and his two sisters, Martha and Mary lived. They were close friends of Jesus, and probably hosted Him and His disciples during their final days in Jerusalem.

The people of Jerusalem saw Jesus as an earthly king who would defeat the oppressive Roman Empire. Their vision of him was limited by their own finite and worldly needs. They failed to understand that Jesus had come to triumph over a much greater enemy than Rome—an enemy whose defeat would have an impact far beyond the boundaries of this life.

Jesus came to overthrow the enemy of our souls—Satan. He came to defeat the power of sin and death. Jesus came not as a political conqueror, but as the Messiah-King, Savior of souls, and giver of eternal life.

Write It on Your Heart:

Grab a piece of paper or notecard-some markers, pens, and pencils. Write out the following scripture. Use the verse below or use your Bible to locate the verse.

“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” - Zechariah 9:9

DAY 2

Monday

Jesus and his disciples journeyed to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Passover. They found the sacred city of God overflowing with thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the world.

Entering the Temple, Jesus saw the money changers, along with merchants who were selling animals for sacrifice. Pilgrims carried coins from their hometowns, most bearing the images of Roman emperors or Greek gods, which Temple authorities considered idolatrous.

The high priest ordered that only Tyrian shekels would be accepted for the annual half-shekel Temple tax because they contained a higher percentage of silver, so the money changers exchanged unacceptable coins for these shekels. Of course, they extracted a profit, sometimes much more than the law allowed.

Jesus was so filled with anger at the desecration of the holy place that he took some cords and wove them into a small whip. He ran about, knocking over the tables of the money changers, spilling coins on the ground. He drove the exchangers out of the area, along with the men selling pigeons and cattle. He also prevented people from using the court as a shortcut.

As he cleansed the Temple of greed and profit, Jesus quoted from Isaiah 56:7: *“My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers.”* (Matthew 21:13, ESV)

The disciples and others present were in awe of Jesus’ authority in God’s sacred place. His followers remembered a passage from Psalm 69:9: *“Zeal for your house will consume me.”* (John 2:17, ESV)

The common people were impressed by Jesus’ teaching, but the chief priests and scribes feared him because of his popularity. They began to plot a way to destroy Jesus.

- Jesus drove out the money changers from the Temple on Monday of Passion Week, just three days before the Passover and four days before his crucifixion.
- Bible scholars think this incident happened at Solomon’s Porch, the outermost part on the east side of the Temple. Archaeologists have found a Greek inscription dated to 20 B.C. from the Court of the Gentiles, which warns non-Jews not to go any further into the Temple, on fear of death.
- The high priest received a percentage of the profit from the money changers and merchants, so their removal from the Temple precinct would have caused a financial loss to him. Because pilgrims were unfamiliar with Jerusalem, the Temple merchants sold sacrificial animals at a higher price than elsewhere in the city. The high priest overlooked their dishonesty, as long as he got his share.
- Beside his anger at the money changers’ greed, Jesus hated the noise and commotion in the court, which would have made it impossible for devout Gentiles to pray there.

DAY 2 (continued)

Monday

- About 40 years from the time Jesus cleansed the Temple, the Romans would invade Jerusalem during an uprising and level the building completely. It would never be rebuilt. Today on its location on the Temple Mount stands the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim mosque.
- The Gospels tell us that Jesus Christ was ushering in a new covenant with humanity, in which animal sacrifice would end, replaced by the perfect sacrifice of his life on the cross, atoning for human sin once and for all.

Write It on Your Heart:

Grab a piece of paper or notecard-some markers, pens, and pencils. Write out the following scripture. Use the verse below or use your Bible to locate the verse.

His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." - John 2:17

DAY 3

Tuesday

On Tuesday morning, Jesus and his disciples returned to Jerusalem. They passed the withered fig tree on their way, and Jesus spoke to his companions about the importance of faith.

Back at the Temple, religious leaders were upset at Jesus for establishing himself as a spiritual authority. They organized an ambush with the intent to place him under arrest. But Jesus evaded their traps and pronounced harsh judgment on them, saying:

“Blind guides!...For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness...Snakes! Sons of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell?”

- Matthew 23:24-33

Later that afternoon, Jesus left the city and went with his disciples to the Mount of Olives, which sits due east of the Temple and overlooks Jerusalem. Here Jesus gave the Olivet.

Discourse, an elaborate prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the age. He speaks, as usual, in parables, using symbolic language about the end times events, including His Second Coming and the final judgment.

Scripture indicates that this Tuesday was also the day Judas negotiated with the Sanhedrin, the rabbinical court of ancient Israel, to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16).

After a tiring day of confrontation and warnings about the future, once again, Jesus and the disciples returned to Bethany to stay the night.

It’s natural for people to have strong or mixed feelings about Judas. Some feel a sense of hatred toward him for his act of betrayal, others feel pity, and some throughout history have considered him a hero. No matter how you react to him, here are a few biblical facts about Judas Iscariot to keep in mind:

- He made a conscious choice to betray Jesus: Luke 22:48.
- He was a thief with greed in his heart: John 12:6.
- Jesus knew Judas’ heart was set on evil and that he would not repent: John 6:70, John 17:12.
- Judas’ act of betrayal was part of God’s sovereign plan: Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12-13, Matthew 20:18 and 26:20-25, Acts 1:16,20.

Write It on Your Heart:

Grab a piece of paper or notecard-some markers, pens, and pencils. Write out the following scripture. Use the verse below or use your Bible to locate the verse.

“And said, “Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.” - Acts 1:16

DAY 4

Wednesday

The Bible doesn't say what the Lord did on the Wednesday of Passion Week. Scholars speculate that after two exhausting days in Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples spent this day resting in Bethany in anticipation of Passover.

Just a short time previously, Jesus had revealed to the disciples, and the world, that he had power over death by raising Lazarus from the grave. After seeing this incredible miracle, many people in Bethany believed that Jesus was the Son of God and put their faith in him. Also in Bethany just a few nights earlier, Lazarus' sister Mary had lovingly anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume.

Write It on Your Heart:

Grab a piece of paper or notecard-some markers, pens, and pencils. Write out the following scripture. Use the verse below or use your Bible to locate the verse.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." - Matthew 11:28

DAY 5

Thursday

From Bethany, Jesus sent Peter and John ahead to the Upper Room in Jerusalem to make the preparations for the Passover Feast. That evening after sunset, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples as they prepared to share in the Passover. By performing this humble act of service, Jesus demonstrated by example how believers should love one another. Today, many churches practice foot-washing ceremonies as a part of their Maundy Thursday services.

Then, Jesus shared the feast of Passover with his disciples, saying:

“I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won’t eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 22:15-16, NLT)

As the Lamb of God, Jesus was about to fulfill the meaning of Passover by giving his body to be broken and his blood to be shed in sacrifice, freeing us from sin and death. During this Last Supper, Jesus established the Lord’s Supper, or Communion, instructing his followers to continually remember his sacrifice by sharing in the elements of bread and wine (Luke 22:19-20).

Later, Jesus and the disciples left the Upper Room and went to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed in agony to God the Father. Luke’s Gospel says that “his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44, ESV).

Late that evening in Gethsemane, Jesus was betrayed with a kiss by Judas Iscariot and arrested by the Sanhedrin. He was taken to the home of Caiaphas, the High Priest, where the whole council had gathered to begin making their case against Jesus.

Meanwhile, in the early morning hours, as Jesus’ trial was getting underway, Peter denied knowing his Master three times before the rooster crowed.

Write It on Your Heart:

Grab a piece of paper or notecard-some markers, pens, and pencils. Write out the following scripture. Use the verse below or use your Bible to locate the verse.

“And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” - 1 Corinthians 11:24

DAY 6

Friday

On Good Friday, Christians focus on Jesus Christ's death. The night before he died, Jesus and his disciples took part in the Last Supper and then went to the Garden of Gethsemane. There, Jesus spent his last hours praying to the Father while his disciples slept nearby:

"Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'" (Matthew 26:39, NIV)

"This cup" was death by crucifixion, one of the most dreaded and painful methods of execution in the ancient world. But "this cup" also represented something even worse than crucifixion. Christ knew in death he would take on the sins of the world—even the most heinous crimes ever committed—to set believers free from sin and death:

"He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood." (Luke 22:44, NLT)

Before morning dawned, Jesus was arrested. At daybreak, he was questioned by the Sanhedrin and condemned. But before they could put him to death, the religious leaders first needed Rome to approve of their death sentence. Jesus was taken to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea. Pilate found no reason to charge Jesus. When he discovered that Jesus was from Galilee, which was under Herod's jurisdiction, Pilate had Jesus sent to Herod who was in Jerusalem at the time.

Jesus refused to answer Herod's questions, so Herod sent him back to Pilate. Although Pilate found him innocent, he feared the crowds who wanted Jesus crucified, so he sentenced Jesus to death. Jesus was brutally beaten, mocked, struck on the head with a staff and spit on. A crown of thorns was placed on his head and he was stripped naked. He was made to carry his own cross, but when he grew too weak, Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry it for him.

Jesus was led to Calvary where soldiers drove stake-like nails through his wrists and ankles, affixing him to the cross. An inscription that read "King of the Jews" was placed over his head. Jesus hung on the cross for approximately six hours until he took his final breath. While he was on the cross, soldiers cast lots for Jesus' clothing. Onlookers shouted insults and jeered.

Two criminals were crucified at the same time. One hung on Jesus' right and the other on his left (Luke 23:39-43). At one point, Jesus cried out to his father, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Then darkness blanketed the land. As Jesus gave up his spirit, an earthquake shook the ground and caused the temple curtain to rip in half from top to bottom:

"At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people." (Matthew 27:51-53, NLT)

DAY 6 (continued)

Friday

It was customary for Roman soldiers to break the criminal's legs, causing death to come more quickly. But only the thieves had their legs broken. When the soldiers came to Jesus, he was already dead. As evening fell, Joseph of Arimathea (with the help of Nicodemus) took Jesus' body down from the cross and had him placed in his own new tomb. A great stone was rolled over the entrance, sealing the tomb.

Why Is Good Friday Called "Good?"

In Christianity, God is holy and humans are sinful; holiness is incompatible with sin, so humanity's sin separates us from God. The punishment for sin is eternal death. But human death and animal sacrifices are insufficient to atone for sin. Atonement requires a perfect, spotless sacrifice, offered in just the right way.

Christians believe that Jesus Christ was the one and only perfect God-man, that his death provided the perfect atoning sacrifice for sin and that through Jesus, our own sins can be forgiven. Consequently, when we accept Jesus Christ's payment for sin, he washes away our sin and restores our right standing with God; God's mercy and grace make salvation possible and we receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. These beliefs explain why the date of Jesus' crucifixion is considered a "Good" Friday.

Good Friday is the most difficult day of Passion Week. Christ's journey turned treacherous and acutely painful in these final hours leading to his death.

According to Scripture, Judas Iscariot, the disciple who had betrayed Jesus, was overcome with remorse and hanged himself early Friday morning.

Meanwhile, before the third hour (9 a.m.), Jesus endured the shame of false accusations, condemnation, mockery, beatings, and abandonment. After multiple unlawful trials, he was sentenced to death by crucifixion, one of the most horrible and disgraceful methods of capital punishment known at the time.

Before Christ was led away, soldiers spit on him, tormented and mocked him, and pierced him with a crown of thorns. Then Jesus carried his own cross to Calvary where, again, he was mocked and insulted as Roman soldiers nailed him to the wooden cross.

Jesus spoke seven final statements from the cross. His first words were, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34, NIV). His last words were, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46, NIV)

DAY 6 (continued)

Friday

Then, about the ninth hour (3 p.m.), Jesus breathed his last breath and died.

By 6 p.m. Friday evening, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus' body down from the cross and lay it in a tomb.

Write It on Your Heart:

Grab a piece of paper or notecard-some markers, pens, and pencils. Write out the following scripture. Use the verse below or use your Bible to locate the verse.

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.'" - John 11:25-26

DAY 7

Saturday

Jesus' body lay in its tomb, where it was guarded by Roman soldiers throughout the day on Saturday, which was the Sabbath. When the Sabbath ended at 6 p.m., Christ's body was ceremonially treated for burial with spices purchased by Nicodemus:

"He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth." (John 19: 39-40, NLT)

Nicodemus, like Joseph of Arimathea, was a member of the Sanhedrin, the court that had condemned Jesus Christ to death. For a time, both men had lived as secret followers of Jesus, afraid to make a public profession of faith because of their prominent positions in the Jewish community.

Similarly, both were deeply affected by Christ's death. They boldly came out of hiding, risking their reputations and their lives because they had come to realize that Jesus was, indeed, the long-awaited Messiah. Together they cared for Jesus' body and prepared it for burial.

While his physical body lay in the tomb, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sin by offering the perfect, spotless sacrifice. He conquered death, both spiritually and physically, securing our eternal salvation:

"For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God." (1 Peter 1:18-19, NLT)

Write It on Your Heart:

Grab a piece of paper or notecard-some markers, pens, and pencils. Write out the following scripture. Use the verse below or use your Bible to locate the verse.

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." - 1 Peter 1:18-19

DAY 8

Easter Sunday

On Easter, we reach the culmination of Holy Week.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event of the Christian faith. The very foundation of all Christian doctrine hinges on the truth of this account.

Early Sunday morning, several women Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Salome, and Mary the mother of James went to the tomb and discovered that the large stone covering the entrance had been rolled away. An angel announced:

“Don’t be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen.” (Matthew 28:5-6, NLT)

On the day of his resurrection, Jesus Christ made at least five appearances. Mark’s Gospel says the first person to see him was Mary Magdalene. Jesus also appeared to Peter, to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and later that day to all of the disciples except Thomas, while they were gathered in a house for prayer.

The eyewitness accounts in the Gospels provide what Christians believe to be undeniable evidence that the resurrection of Jesus Christ did indeed happen. Two millennia after his death, followers of Christ still flock to Jerusalem to see the empty tomb.

Sources:

Fairchild, Mary. “Holy Week Timeline: From Palm Sunday to the Resurrection.” Learn Religions, Feb. 11, 2020, [learnreligions.com/holy-week-timeline-700618](https://www.learnreligions.com/holy-week-timeline-700618).