

# CHAPTER 4

## JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION



### OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord,

Thank You for Your abundant love and grace. As I read about Jesus' last days on earth, open my eyes and heart to receive Your Word. Reveal Yourself and Your Truth to me. Give me deeper spiritual insight into the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection. Help me to more clearly see how high, wide, and deep Your love is for me. You gave Your Son and Your Son gave His life so that I can live with You eternally. All praise be to You forever.

Amen

# CHAPTER SUMMARY

## JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

*(Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)*

**A**ccording to John's gospel, Jesus arrived in Bethany on the Sabbath (Saturday), six days before Passover. When people heard Jesus was there, they came to see the Man who had raised Lazarus from the dead.

On Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem seated on a donkey. A large number of people followed close behind, cheering and praising Him. The Pharisees and other religious leaders watched in anguish as the people declared Jesus as their King.

On Monday, Jesus found merchants in the Temple selling animals for the Passover celebration. Outraged by the lack of respect for God's house, Jesus knocked over the merchants' tables and chased them out of the Temple. Afterward, Jesus taught for a while and then returned to Bethany.

On Tuesday, Jesus traveled the two miles back to Jerusalem. When He entered the Temple, the religious leaders cornered Him, asking who had given Him authority to run the merchants out of the Temple. Jesus condemned the religious leaders, calling them hypocrites. Jesus said they only pretended to know God, but were far from Him. Jesus later met with His disciples and predicted the destruction of the Temple. He also described events which would occur at the end of time.

In the meantime—on either Tuesday or Wednesday—the high priest held a meeting with religious leaders to strategize plans for Jesus' death. Judas joined their meeting and agreed to betray Jesus.

On Thursday, Jesus and the disciples met in an upstairs room to celebrate Passover. Jesus gave His disciples and all future disciples instructions on how they were to remember Him. Luke writes, *"He [Jesus] took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you'"* (Luke 22:19–20 NIV).

After the meal, Jesus spent time talking to His disciples in a farewell address. John's gospel provides the most detailed information about Jesus' last words to His disciples while in the upstairs room. Late Thursday night—after the Passover meal—they went to the Mount of Olives in a garden grove called Gethsemane. Shortly after their arrival, Judas showed up with Roman soldiers. Judas identified Jesus, betraying Him with a kiss. The soldiers then arrested Jesus and carried Him away to the residence of the high priest.

Early Friday morning, Jesus endured several trials and severe beatings. He was initially questioned by Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, who quickly assembled the religious leaders and held a trial. They charged Jesus with blasphemy and ordered guards to carry Him away to Pilate. After listening to Jesus' accusers, Pilate said the charges against Jesus did not warrant the death penalty. Having heard that Jesus was a Galilean, Pilate sent Him to Herod for a verdict. When Jesus appeared before Herod, He was questioned and mocked, but remained silent. Herod eventually became disinterested and returned Jesus to Pilate.

Pilate announced to the crowd that he did not find Jesus guilty of anything and neither did Herod. Pilate said he would have Jesus flogged and then released. When Jesus' accusers heard this, they incited the crowd to ask for Jesus' death. Fearing a riot, Pilate gave in to the people's demands and ordered Jesus' death. Jesus was nailed to a cross on Friday morning at about 9:00 A.M. By 3:00 P.M., He was dead. Jesus was buried—on that same Friday—in a tomb. On Saturday morning, Roman soldiers were posted to guard the tomb. On Sunday morning, the tomb was empty! Jesus had risen from the dead and later made several resurrection appearances.

### Jesus' Resurrection Appearances

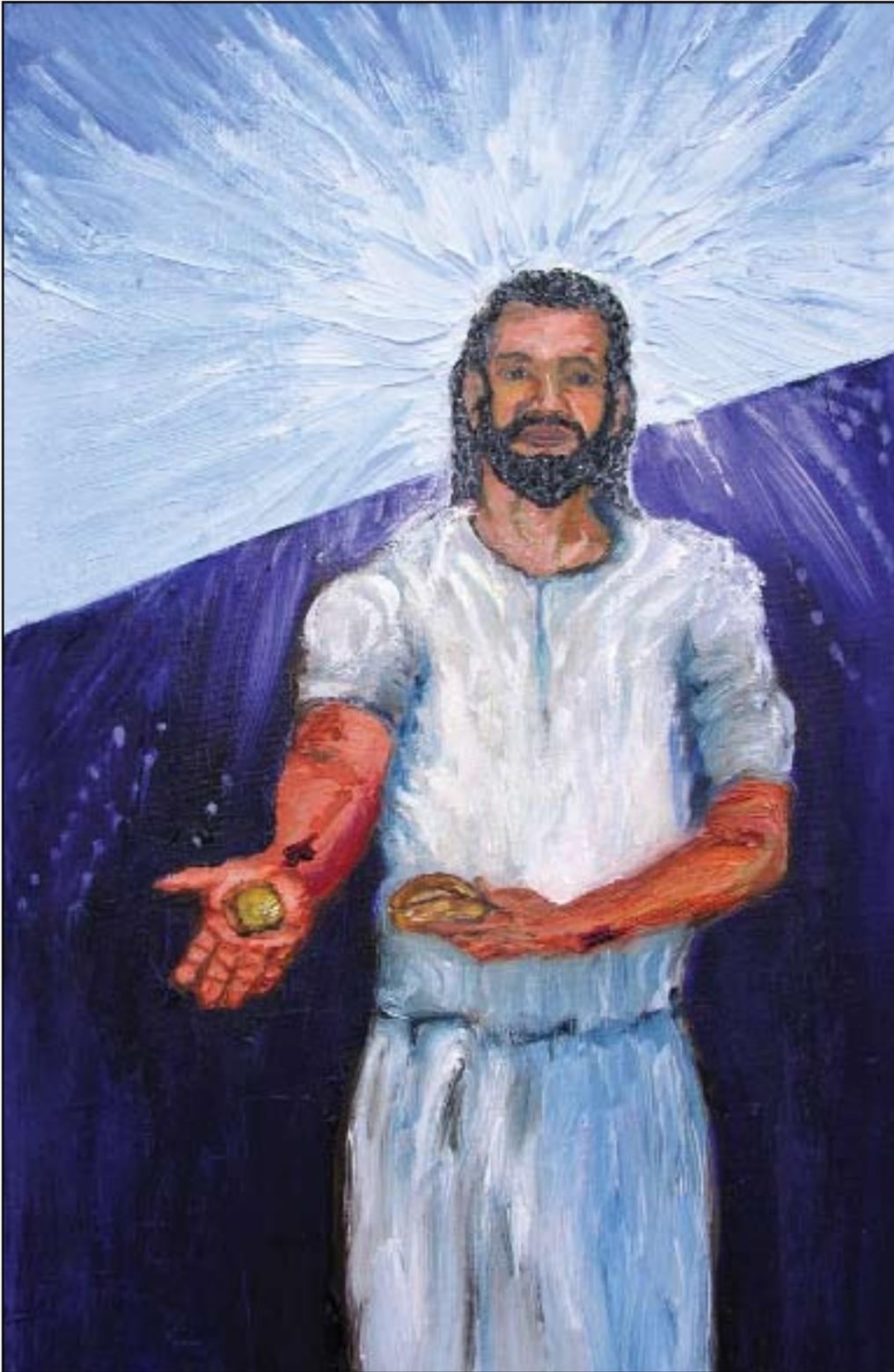
Appeared To:	Scriptural Reference
Mary Magdalene at Jesus' tomb	Mark 16:9–11; John 20:11–18
The other women running from the tomb	Matthew 28:8–10
Two of Jesus' followers on the road	Mark 16:12–13; Luke 24:13–31
Peter in Jerusalem	Luke 24:33–34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
Ten disciples in Jerusalem (Thomas absent)	Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–25
Eleven disciples in Jerusalem (Thomas present)	John 20:26–31; 1 Corinthians 15:5
Seven disciples while fishing in Galilee	John 21:1–23
Eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee	Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 16:15–18
Disciples who witnessed Jesus' ascension	Luke 24:44–51; Acts 1:1–12
Five hundred followers at one time	1 Corinthians 15:6
James (Jesus' half-brother)	1 Corinthians 15:7
Apostle Paul	Acts 9:3–16; 1 Corinthians 15:8
Apostle John	Revelation 1:10–3:22

	<b>Approximate Timeline</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Biblical Scriptures</b>	<b>Author</b>
<b>Entering Jerusalem</b>	30 A.D.	Jerusalem, Bethany	Matthew 21:1–17 Mark 11:1–19 Luke 19:28–48 John 12:12–50	Matthew Mark Luke John
<b>Debates and Warnings</b>	30 A.D.	Jerusalem	Matthew 21:18–26:16 Mark 11:20–14:11 Luke 20:1–22:6	Matthew Mark Luke
<b>Jesus' Farewell</b>	30 A.D.	Jerusalem	Matthew 26:1–46 Mark 14:12–42 Luke 22:7–46 John 13:1–17:26	Matthew Mark Luke John
<b>Arrest and Trial</b>	30 A.D.	Jerusalem	Matthew 26:47–27:31 Mark 14:43–15:20 Luke 22:47–23:25 John 18:1–19:16	Matthew Mark Luke John
<b>Crucifixion and Resurrection</b>	30 A.D.	Jerusalem, Galilee	Matthew 27:32–28:20 Mark 15:21–16:20 Luke 23:26–24:53 John 19:17–21:25	Matthew Mark Luke John

MAP OF KEY LOCATIONS



## THE RESURRECTION



“Jesus told her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.’”  
(John 11:25)

## SECTION 1: ENTERING JERUSALEM

**Jesus Rides Into Jerusalem on a Donkey—(Sunday): (Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–44; John 12:12–19)**

- After spending the night in Bethany, Jesus and His disciples set out for Jerusalem. As they approached the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples into the village to find a certain young donkey.
- The disciples found the donkey and brought it to Jesus. Using the disciples' cloaks as a makeshift saddle, Jesus mounted the animal and rode toward Jerusalem. The twelve disciples and others followed close behind.
- When people heard Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, large crowds gathered along the roadside. The crowd was filled with emotion as they waited for Him to pass by.
- Many in the crowd had witnessed Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. In their excitement, some people lined the road with palm branches, while others took off their cloaks and laid them in front of the processional.
- As Jesus passed by, the people enthusiastically cried out, "*Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!*" (John 12:13 NIV). Their shouts and praises could be heard for miles.



Note: *Hosanna* is a Hebrew word that means, "Save us now!" This expression is similar to contemporary sayings as "God Bless the King" or "Hail to the Chief." The people were proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah and King of Israel. Today, this event is called "The Triumphal Entry," and is celebrated on the holiday known as "Palm Sunday." Five days later, these same people rejected Jesus as their King. Ironically, their praises turned into demands for His crucifixion.



During the months before Passover, Jesus deliberately stayed away from Jerusalem. On the Sunday before His death, He came out of seclusion, riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. This fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy written over 500 years earlier. Zechariah wrote, "*Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey's colt*" (Zechariah 9:9).

In Jesus' day, kings proclaimed victory by riding through the city on a horse. In a display of humility, Jesus proclaimed victory seated on a donkey. This symbolically pictured Jesus as a humble King, coming to declare peace. The crowd's shouts of praise fulfilled another prophecy, "*I have seen what they do, but I will heal them anyway! I will lead them. I will comfort those who mourn, bringing words of praise to their lips*" (Isaiah 57:18–19). The people praised Jesus for healing their physical bodies, but failed to realize He was the One who would bring spiritual healing as well.

- The Pharisees watched in anguish as the people praised Jesus. Feeling defeated, they tried to stop the people from declaring Jesus the King of Israel.
- Jesus called out to the Pharisees saying, "*If they (the people) keep quiet, these stones will start shouting*" (Luke 19:40 CEV).



Note: In effect, Jesus' words about the stones shouting out came true. (See Luke 19:40.) When Jesus was arrested, the people stopped praising Him; and His disciples were silent and in seclusion. In the middle of this profound silence, an earthquake occurred, causing the stones to shout out in praise.

- As the city of Jerusalem came into view, Jesus looked up and was saddened. Jesus said *“It is too bad that today your people don’t know what will bring them peace! . . . Jerusalem, the time will come when your enemies will build walls around you to attack you . . . They will level you to the ground and kill your people. Not one stone in your buildings will be left on top of another. This will happen because you did not see that God had come to save you”* (Luke 19:42–44 CEV).



Note: Jesus’ prediction about the destruction of Jerusalem came true about forty years after His death. In 66 A.D., the Jews revolted against Rome. In response to this uprising, Roman soldiers came and attacked Jerusalem. After holding the city under siege for several years, the Romans finally broke through its walls in 70 A.D. They set Jerusalem on fire, destroying everything. Titus, the Roman emperor’s son, ordered his men to strip the Temple of its gold. As they stripped each stone for its gold, Jesus’ prophecy came true—*“Not one stone in your buildings will be left on top of another.”*

- When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, He went into the Temple for a short while and then returned to Bethany for the night.

### **Jesus Clears the Temple Again—(Monday): (Matthew 21:12–17; Mark 11:12–19; Luke 19:45–48; John 12:20–50)**

- The next morning, Jesus and His disciples got up and began the journey back to Jerusalem.
- As they were traveling, Jesus became hungry and noticed a fig tree along the path. Jesus walked over to the tree in search of some fruit. Although there were plenty of green leaves, the tree had no figs, for it was not yet fruit-bearing season. Jesus cursed the tree saying no one would ever eat its fruit again.



Note: Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? This incident serves as a reminder to those who have accepted Jesus as their Savior. When we accept Jesus’ offer of salvation, He gives us new life—like the green leaves on the fig tree. Jesus then expects those who believe in Him to bear fruit—grow spiritually—actively demonstrating God’s love to the world.

- When Jesus and His disciples reached Jerusalem, they went to the Temple. Merchants were selling animals to prospective customers for Passover.
- In a fit of righteous indignation, Jesus knocked over the merchants’ tables and chased them out of the Temple.
- Outraged by the lack of respect, Jesus shouted, *“The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves”* (Mark 11:17). (See Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 for cross-references.)
- Afterward, Jesus began teaching in the Temple. People from many different countries were in Jerusalem for Passover. Some Greeks, who were in Jerusalem for the celebration, asked Philip to introduce them to Jesus.
- Andrew went with Philip to tell Jesus about the men’s request. Jesus said to His two disciples, *“Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me”* (John 12:26).
- Troubled by His impending death for the sins of the world, Jesus added, *“Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name”* (John 12:27–28a).
- As soon as Jesus finished speaking, a thunderous voice spoke from heaven saying, *“I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again”* (John 12:28b).

- When the people heard this, they did not know what to think. Jesus explained that the words were spoken for their benefit and not His.
- Jesus then said, *“When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself”* (John 12:32).
- When the crowd realized Jesus was speaking of His death, they were confused. The people shouted out that the Messiah is supposed to live forever.



Note: How did the people know the Messiah would live forever? In Jesus' day, Jewish children studied the Scriptures—the Old Testament—in the same way children study textbooks today. Having learned Scripture from childhood, they were very much aware of Old Testament prophecies. (For Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah's eternal reign, see Isaiah 9:6–7, Ezekiel 37:25, and Daniel 7:13–14. For prophecies about the Messiah's death, see Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and Daniel 9:6.)

- As the people mumbled and complained about Jesus' gloomy message, He turned to them and said, *“My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you”* (John 12:35).
- After addressing the crowd, Jesus returned to Bethany with the disciples for the evening.
- Many of Jesus' followers became disillusioned and stopped believing in Him. Those who still believed would not admit it publicly, for fear of being excommunicated.



Jesus' words and actions did not match the people's expectations. Jesus came to shed light—the Truth of God—yet most chose to continue in darkness. The prophet Isaiah explained this phenomena saying, *“Then the LORD told me to go and speak this message to the people: ‘You will listen and listen, but never understand. You will look and look, but never see . . . Make these people stubborn! Make them stop up their ears, cover their eyes, and fail to understand. Don't let them turn to me and be healed’”* (Isaiah 6:9–10 CEV).

The people had not truly accepted God's will and His ways in their heart. They were consumed with their internal struggles with Rome and refused to accept God's Plan of Redemption and Salvation.



## RECOMMENDED BIBLE READING

Luke 19:28–48 **The Triumphal Entry**

Zechariah 9:9–17 **The King's Coming**

## SECTION 2: DEBATES AND WARNINGS

### Religious Leaders Challenge Jesus' Authority—(Tuesday): (Matthew 21:18–27; Mark 11:20–33; Luke 20:1–8)

- The next morning, Jesus and His disciples traveled back to Jerusalem. When they came across the fig tree Jesus had cursed the previous morning, Peter pointed out that the fig tree had withered.
- As the disciples looked at the fig tree in awe, Jesus said, *“Have faith in God! If you have faith in God and don't doubt, you can tell this mountain to get up and jump into the sea, and it will. Everything you ask for in prayer will be yours, if you only have faith”* (Mark 11:22–24 CEV).
- When they reached Jerusalem, the religious leaders were waiting for Jesus as He entered the Temple. They asked who had given Him authority to chase the merchants out of the Temple.
- In response to the religious leaders' question, Jesus said they must first answer one of His questions. Jesus then asked if John the Baptist had been sent from God.
- The religious leaders were dumbfounded. Although they thought John was a false prophet, they knew the crowd believed John was a true prophet from God.
- Concerned the crowd would mob them if they expressed their true feelings, the religious leaders would not answer Jesus' question. Since they chose to remain silent, Jesus refused to answer their question.

### Jesus' Parables in the Temple—(Tuesday): (Matthew 21:28–22:14; Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–19)

- Addressing the religious leaders, Jesus told a parable:
  - *“A man with two sons told the older boy, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ The son answered, ‘No, I won't go,’ but later he changed his mind and went anyway. Then the father told the other son, ‘You go,’ and he said, ‘Yes, sir, I will.’ But he didn't go”* (Matthew 21:28–30).
- Jesus then asked the religious leaders which one of the sons obeyed His father. They quickly responded saying the first son obeyed his father and the second one did not.
- Alluding to the message of His parable, Jesus said tax collectors and prostitutes would make it to heaven before the religious leaders.
- Jesus explained, *“For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn't believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins”* (Matthew 21:32).



Note: In this parable about the two sons, Jesus pointed out that some people—like the first son—initially reject God, but later change their minds and choose to obey Him. Other people—like the second son—claim to belong to God, but refuse to obey Him. The Pharisees and other religious leaders were like the second son. They professed allegiance to God, but rejected God's messengers.

- In another parable, Jesus said to the religious leaders:
  - A landowner planted a vineyard and then left it in the care of tenant farmers. The landowner later sent a few of his servants to harvest the grapes. When the servants arrived, the tenant farmers killed them. Hearing this news, the landowner sent a much larger contingency of servants to his vineyard, but they were also killed. Finally, the landowner sent his son. He thought the farmers would certainly respect his son. But, the farmers murdered the landowner's son as well.

- After telling this parable, Jesus asked the religious leaders what they thought the landowner would do to the farmers who killed his son.
- When the religious leaders did not answer, Jesus said, *“I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit”* (Matthew 21:43).
- Realizing they had been portrayed as the tenant farmers in Jesus' parable, the religious leaders wanted to kill Him right there on the spot. They did not because many people in the crowd believed Jesus was a great prophet.



Note: In the parable about the tenant farmers, God is the landowner who planted the vineyard. The tenant farmers represent those who say they are doing God's work, but refuse to act in accordance to God's will. God sent His prophets—the servants in Jesus' parable—time and time again. The true prophets of God were often threatened, abused, and many lost their lives. God finally sent His Son, Jesus. He, too, was rejected and killed.

### Religious Leaders Question Jesus—(Tuesday): (Matthew 22:15–46; Mark 12:13–37; Luke 20:20–44)

- When Jesus finished His parables, the religious leaders walked away to gather their thoughts. They devised a plan to trap Jesus into saying something against the Roman government so that they could have Him arrested.
- After rehearsing their plan, the Pharisees sent a group of their students and some of Herod's supporters to Jesus with a trick question. They asked Him if it is right for Jews to pay taxes to Caesar.
- Seeing through their deception, Jesus asked whose picture was stamped on the coin. They answered saying Caesar's face appeared on Roman coins. Jesus then said, *“Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God”* (Luke 20:25).
- After Jesus silenced the Pharisees, a group of Sadducees—a religious sect who did not believe in life after death—tried to trap Jesus with a question.
- The Sadducees posed a question about marriage in heaven. They painted a scenario in which a woman was married to a man who died before they had children. In accordance with Jewish law, the deceased man's brother married the woman, but also died before having children. This pattern continued until the woman had married all six of her first husband's brothers.
- The Sadducees concluded their story saying the woman finally died. They then asked Jesus which brother would be married to the woman in the afterlife.
- Jesus answered saying, *“Marriage is for people here on earth . . . those worthy of being raised from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage . . . In this respect they will be like angels”* (Luke 20:34–36).
- Addressing the issue of life after death, Jesus said, *“But now, as to whether the dead will be raised—even Moses proved this. Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, he referred to the Lord as ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ So he is the God of the living, not the dead, for they are all alive to him”* (Luke 20:37–38).
- When the Pharisees realized Jesus had outsmarted the Sadducees, they quickly huddled to come up with another question. One of the Pharisees finally asked Jesus which of the commandments was the most important of the law of Moses.
- Jesus answered saying, *“You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments”* (Matthew 22:37–40).

### Jesus Condemns the Pharisees—(Tuesday): (Matthew 23:1–39; Mark 12:38–44; Luke 20:45–21:4)

- Turning to the crowd and His disciples, Jesus said, *“Beware of these teachers of religious law! For they like to parade around in flowing robes and love to receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces. And how they love the seats of honor in the synagogues and the head table at banquets. Yet they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. Because of this, they will be severely punished”* (Luke 20:46–47).
- Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites, blind guides, and fools. He chastised them for making people follow their man-made rules and traditions instead of God’s Word.
- Jesus said the Pharisees pretended to be righteous—but in essence—they were thieves, robbing the people of their money and the true knowledge of God.
- As Jesus blasted the Pharisees and religious teachers, He repeatedly shouted out, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”* (Matthew 23:13–16, 23, 25, 27, 29 NKJ).



Note: Jesus’ speech about the corruption that existed among the Pharisees is often referred to as the “seven woes.” (See Matthew 23:1–30.) This is because Jesus’ warnings are translated as seven “woes” in the King James Version of the Bible. Jesus systematically pronounced God’s judgment against seven sins commonly practiced by the Pharisees and other religious leaders. The seven sins that Jesus condemned were: keeping people in the dark with false teachings; leading people away from God; making people follow their rules instead of God’s Word; seeking prestige; ignoring justice and mercy; pretending to be righteous; and covering up their secret sins.

- After speaking out against the Pharisees, Jesus walked over to the collection box in the Temple and sat down. As people passed by with donations, Jesus noticed a poor widow who dropped two pennies into the box.
- Calling His disciples together, Jesus praised the widow saying, *“I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on”* (Mark 12:43–44).

### Jesus Tells About Future Events—(Tuesday): (Matthew 24:1–51; Mark 13:1–37; Luke 21:5–38)

- Afterward, Jesus and His disciples left the Temple and headed for the Mount of Olives. When they reached the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Jesus about the future and how they would know His prophecies were about to be fulfilled.
- Jesus admonished the disciples to keep their eyes open for false messiahs and prophets who would try to mislead them.
- Jesus then described the end of time saying, *“In those days, right after that time of suffering, ‘The sun will become dark, and the moon will no longer shine. The stars will fall, and the powers in the sky will be shaken.’ Then the Son of Man will be seen coming in the clouds with great power and glory. He will send his angels to gather his chosen ones from all over the earth”* (Mark 13:24–27 CEV).
- Jesus assured the disciples that everything He had described would take place.



Note: Jesus’ prophecy about the end of time is the same as the prophet Joel’s description of “The Day of the Lord.” (See Joel 2:10–11; 30–32; 3:14–16.)

### Jesus’ Parables About the Kingdom of Heaven—(Tuesday): (Matthew 25:1–46)

- Jesus then told His disciples a parable as a reminder that believers should always be prepared for His second coming:

- Ten bridesmaids sat waiting for the bridegroom. As they waited with their oil lamps for the celebration, five of the bridesmaids ran out of oil. While these five were out buying oil for their lamps, the bridegroom arrived. The five bridesmaids, who came prepared with enough oil, entered the banquet hall with the bridegroom. When the other five bridesmaids finally returned with the oil they had purchased, they were not allowed into the banquet hall.

### Judas' Decision To Betray Jesus—(Tuesday or Wednesday): (Matthew 26:1–16; Mark 14:1–11; Luke 22:1–6)

- In the meantime, Caiaphas, the high priest, held a secret meeting with the religious leaders. They discussed various ways to bring charges against Jesus.



The Pharisees and other religious leaders refused to believe Jesus was the Messiah. Although they were well-versed in Old Testament Scripture, they failed to see Messianic prophecy unfolding before their very eyes. The religious leaders rejected God's most important gift to humanity.

The prophet Isaiah wrote about the people's rejection of the Messiah saying, "*Who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm? My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care*" (Isaiah 53:1–3).

- After hearing about the religious leaders' secret meeting, Judas Iscariot went to the priests and agreed to betray Jesus.
- The religious leaders were excited that one of Jesus' disciples would participate in a plot to capture Him. They promised to give Judas a handsome reward as soon as Jesus was arrested.
- After the meeting, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus. He thought it best to corner Jesus at a time when He was not surrounded by a large crowd of people.



## RECOMMENDED BIBLE READING

Mark 13:1–37 **Jesus Tells About Future Events**

Joel 2:1–11 **The Day of the Lord**

## SECTION 3: JESUS' FAREWELL

### Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet—(Thursday Evening): (Matthew 26:17–19; Mark 14:12–16; Luke 22:7–13; John 13:1–20)

- In preparation for Passover, Jesus instructed two of His disciples to find a certain man in Jerusalem and tell him his upstairs room was needed for the Lord.
- As the two disciples entered the city, they found the man and made arrangements to prepare the Passover meal in his upstairs room.
- Later that evening, Jesus and all twelve of His disciples entered the room and sat down. Jesus then took off His robe and began washing the disciples' feet.
- When Jesus approached Peter, he did not want Jesus to wash his feet, thinking it was too lowly a job for Jesus to perform. Jesus said to Peter, *"Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me"* (John 13:8b). When Peter heard this, he wanted Jesus to wash his hands and head as well as his feet.
- Jesus told Peter and the other disciples that they were missing His point. He said to them, *"And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you"* (John 13:14–15).



Note: In Jesus' day, people walked for miles in sandals. By the time they reached their destination, their feet were dusty and needed to be cleaned. It was customary for servants or slaves to perform this job. Jesus took on the servant's role and washed His disciples' feet. In doing so, Jesus taught that an opportunity to serve is more important than power and prestige.

### Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper—(Thursday Evening): (Matthew 26:20–30; Mark 14:17–26; Luke 22:14–30; John 13:21–30)

- Jesus then sat down at the table with His disciples. Holding the bread in His hands, Jesus thanked God for it. After breaking the bread into pieces, Jesus gave each of His disciples a piece and said, *"This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me"* (Luke 22:19b).
- Jesus then held up a cup of wine and said, *"This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you"* (Luke 22:20).



Note: "Covenant" is the term used to describe the various promises and agreements God entered into with mankind. Under the old covenant, Israel was in right standing with God if they obeyed His laws. The old covenant was sealed with animals' blood. Jesus established a new covenant and sealed it with His blood. In the new covenant, we are made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus told His disciples to remember Him and the sacrifice He made for the remission of our sins. Today, Christ-followers remember Jesus' sacrifice in an observance called the Lord's Supper (also known as "The Last Supper," "Communion," and "Eucharist.")

- Visibly disturbed and deeply troubled, Jesus announced that one of His disciples would betray Him.
- The disciples were in shock. They had no idea to whom Jesus referred. One of the disciples leaned over and asked Jesus which of them would betray Him.
- Jesus answered saying, *"I will dip this piece of bread in the sauce and give it to the one I was talking about"* (John 13:26 CEV).

- Jesus then dipped His bread in the sauce and handed it to Judas Iscariot. Judas ate the bread and then left.
- Although Jesus knew why Judas left the room, the disciples had no idea what was going on. Since Judas was the treasurer, some thought He left to pay for the food or donate some money to the poor.
- Turning His attention to the eleven disciples, Jesus said, “*The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him . . . So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples*” (John 13:31, 34–35).
- After the meal, the disciples started talking about the Kingdom of God. Before long, the discussion turned into another argument about which of them would be the greatest in God’s Kingdom.
- Jesus interjected, “*In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people. . . . But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. . . . For I am among you as one who serves*” (Luke 22:25–27).

### Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial—(Thursday Evening) (Luke 22:31–38; John 13:31–38)

- Jesus knew His disciples would soon abandon Him. Turning to Peter, Jesus said, “*Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers*” (Luke 22:31–32).
- Peter insisted that he was ready to die for Jesus. In a prediction, Jesus said, “*Peter, I tell you that before a rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will say three times that you don’t know me*” (Luke 22:34 CEV).

### Jesus Comforts the Disciples—(Thursday Evening): (John 14:1–31)

- Although Jesus was in deep anguish, He tried to comfort His disciples, telling them He was leaving to prepare a place for them.
- Jesus then said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6).



As the Way, Truth, and Life, Jesus is our Guide to God the Father. He is the embodiment of God’s character—His righteousness, justice, love, mercy, and grace. Jesus accompanies us through life, showing us the way to Truth and more abundant life. We can depend on Jesus to guide us successfully through life’s difficult challenges.

- Confused about Jesus’ relationship with God the Father, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus answered, “*Philip, I have been with you for a long time. Don’t you know who I am? If you have seen me, you have seen the Father*” (John 14:9 CEV).



Note: Jesus explained that He and God the Father are One. Jesus is God made human and is a mirror image of God the Father. (See John 1:1–3, 14; Colossians 1:9; Hebrews 1:3.) Jesus is the complete revelation of God’s character and expresses God’s will for all mankind.

- Jesus then said, “*I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. . . . When the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart*” (John 14:16–17, 26–27).



Note: The Holy Spirit lives inside of every believer. He is a Counselor, Guide, Instructor, Comforter, Helper, Advocate, Teacher, and Friend. The Holy Spirit is the One who helps us recognize sin and points us toward the righteousness of God (John 14:16–17; 16:7–8).

### Jesus' Farewell Message to His Disciples—(Thursday Evening): (John 15:1–17:26)

- Jesus encouraged the disciples to stay grounded in their faith and to stay focused on God. He told them to continue the good work He began.
- Jesus said, *“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener . . . Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing”* (John 15:1, 5, 8).



As the True Vine, Jesus is our Nurturer. God is the Gardener, the One who owns and oversees the garden. Jesus is the True Vine, the One who nourishes the branches, strengthening and helping them grow. The branches are the disciples, who are to produce fruit for the Gardener. The branches cannot bear fruit if they are separated from the vine. As disciples, we must stay connected to Jesus if we are to be productive members of God's Kingdom.

- Jesus wanted to share as much as possible with His disciples. He explained that they would be hated and persecuted saying, *“They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me . . . He who hates me hates my Father as well . . . But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason’”* (John 15:21, 23, 25 NIV).
- When Jesus shared that He would soon leave to join God the Father in heaven, the disciples were visibly saddened.
- Offering words of encouragement, Jesus said, *“But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate (the Holy Spirit) won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. . . . When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth”* (John 16:7–8, 13).
- As Jesus finished His farewell speech, He prayed for Himself, the disciples, and all future believers.



Note: After eating the Passover meal with His disciples, Jesus delivered a passionate farewell message. This message is documented in John 14:1–17:26 and is well worth reading.

### Jesus Predicts the Disciples Would Desert Him—(Thursday Evening): (Matthew 26:31–35; Mark 14:27–31)

- After a closing prayer, Jesus and His disciples headed for the Mount of Olives.
- As they were walking, Jesus said to His disciples, *“All of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, ‘God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered’”* (Mark 14:27).



The prophet Zechariah wrote, *“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares the LORD Almighty. ‘Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered’* (Zechariah 13:7 NIV). Quoting this scripture, Jesus predicted His disciples would lose courage and desert Him. After Jesus' arrest, John was the only one of Jesus' disciples who stayed and witnessed His crucifixion. All the other disciples fled, fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy.

**Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane—(Late Thursday Evening): (Matthew 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46)**

- When Jesus and His disciples finally reached the Mount of Olives, they stopped in a garden grove called Gethsemane.
- Jesus told the disciples to stay there while He went off to pray. He asked Peter, James, and John to join Him in prayer.
- In great distress, Jesus cried out, *“Father, if it is possible, don't let this happen to me! Father, you can do anything. Don't make me suffer by having me drink from this cup. But do what you want, and not what I want”* (Mark 14:35–36 CEV).
- As Jesus was praying, Peter, James, and John fell asleep. An angel came and stood by Jesus to strengthen Him in His hour of grief.
- After awhile, Jesus woke the three disciples and said, *“Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak”* (Mark 14:37–38).
- Jesus then walked away and prayed again, more fervently and in great agony.
- After praying a while longer, Jesus walked over to the disciples and saw they had fallen asleep again. They were exhausted from the days' events and could not keep their eyes open. Jesus went back and prayed for a third time.
- When Jesus finished praying, He returned to find the disciples still sleep. He woke them saying, *“The time has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to sinners. Get up! Let's go. The one who will betray me is already here”* (Mark 14:41c–42 CEV).
- Judas suddenly appeared accompanied by a large number of Roman soldiers and Temple guards.

**RECOMMENDED BIBLE READING**

John 17:1–26 **Jesus' Prayers in the Upstairs Room**

1 Kings 8:22–30 **King Solomon's Prayer**

## SECTION 4: JESUS' ARREST AND TRIAL

**Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested—(11:00 P.M.–1:00 A.M., Thursday Evening/Friday Morning): (Matthew 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:1–11)**

- Judas led the soldiers directly to Jesus and then greeted Him with a kiss. Jesus said to him, *“Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”* (Luke 22:48).
- Turning to the soldiers, Jesus asked who they were looking for. The soldiers answered, saying they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth.
- As soon as Jesus identified Himself, the soldiers surrounded Him. Jesus did not resist. Instead, He asked the soldiers to take Him and let His disciples go.
- When the disciples realized what was happening, they rushed to Jesus' side. They asked Jesus if they should put up a fight. Peter grabbed a sword and cut off the right ear of a servant to the high priest.
- Jesus told Peter to put his sword away. Turning His attention to the servant of the high priest, Jesus touched the man's ear and miraculously healed it.
- Jesus then said to His disciples, *“Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?”* (Matthew 26:52c–54).
- The Roman soldiers and Temple guards arrested Jesus without a struggle. When this happened, the disciples ran away, fulfilling Jesus' prediction and Zechariah's prophecy—*“Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”*



The prophet Isaiah described the Messiah as a man condemned without cause. He wrote, *“Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people. He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone”* (Isaiah 53:8–9a).

**Annas Interrogates Jesus—(1:00 A.M.–6:00 A.M., Friday Morning): (John 18:12–24)**

- After Jesus' arrest, the soldiers took Him to the residence of the high priest. Annas was the first to interrogate Jesus. He had been high priest before Caiaphas, the current high priest, was appointed to the position. Annas was Caiaphas' father-in-law.
- Peter and another disciple (most likely John) followed Jesus from a safe distance behind. After they arrived at the high priest's living quarters, a young woman saw Peter and asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples. Peter quickly said, “no.”
- Inside the house, Annas was busy interrogating Jesus. When Annas asked Jesus what kind of message He had been teaching, Jesus answered, *“I have not spoken in secret. Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said”* (John 18:20c–21).
- As soon as Jesus said this, one of the guards slapped Him and said His remark was disrespectful. Frustrated, Annas ordered the guards to take Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest, for further interrogation.

**Caiaphas Interrogates Jesus—(1:00 A.M.–6:00 A.M., Friday Morning): (Matthew 26:57–68; Mark 14:53–65)**

- Caiaphas had already assembled members of the Sanhedrin—the Jewish high court—when the soldiers arrived with Jesus. He had also rounded up several people who had agreed to testify against Jesus.
- Caiaphas frantically tried to gather evidence against Jesus, but his so-called witnesses' stories were conflicting. Frustrated, Caiaphas finally asked Jesus directly if He was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.
- Jesus replied, *"I AM. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven"* (Mark 14:62).
- When Caiaphas heard Jesus' reply, he ripped his clothing in horror and declared Jesus guilty of blasphemy. Other members of the Sanhedrin agreed and said He must die.



Note: Why did Caiaphas accuse Jesus of blasphemy? Jesus echoed the same words God used to introduce Himself to Moses. God said to Moses, *I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you*" (Exodus 3:14). When Jesus said "I AM," He was, in fact, acknowledging Himself as God. Caiaphas was appalled that Jesus would use these words in reference to Himself. He tore his clothing, an ancient custom which showed utter shock and disgust. Caiaphas then used Jesus' own words to accuse Him of blasphemy.

**Peter's Denial of Jesus—(1:00 A.M.–6:00 A.M., Friday Morning): (Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–65; John 18:25–27)**

- Meanwhile, Peter was standing outside, trying to stay warm. When some people noticed Peter and said he was one of Jesus' disciples, he denied it.
- After hearing Peter's Galilean accent, one of the men confronted Peter, insisting he had to be one of Jesus' disciples because he was from Galilee.
- For the third time that night, Peter denied knowing Jesus. At that moment, a rooster began to crow.
- When Peter heard the rooster, he looked up in time to see the guards taking Jesus away. Peter immediately realized Jesus' words had come true. Walking away in utter shame, Peter cried bitter tears of deep sorrow.

**Judas' Remorse—(Very Early Friday Morning): (Matthew 27:1–10)**

- When Judas realized the religious leaders were planning to kill Jesus, he was full of remorse. He went to the Temple and told the priests Jesus was innocent.
- Judas tried to return the thirty pieces of silver he had received for betraying Jesus, but the priests refused to accept the money.
- When Judas realized there was nothing he could do or say to change their minds, he threw the coins on the floor and ran out of the Temple. Judas found a tree in a secluded area and hung himself.
- Meanwhile, the priests were trying to determine what they should do with the money. Their laws prohibited them from accepting money paid for murder.
- After discussing the situation, the priests decided to purchase a field owned by a potter and convert it into a cemetery for those unable to afford a proper burial.



With remarkable accuracy, the prophet Zechariah described what happened to the money paid for Jesus' betrayal. He wrote, "*If you like, give me my wages, whatever I am worth; but only if you want to.*" So they counted out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—this magnificent sum at which they valued me! So I took the thirty coins and threw them to the potter in the Temple of the LORD" (Zechariah 11:12–13).

Judas was paid thirty pieces of silver—a day's wages—for betraying Jesus. Judas threw the coins on the floor inside the Temple; and the priests picked up the coins and used them to pay a potter for his field.

**Jesus' Trial Before Pilate—(6:00 A.M.–9:00 A.M., Friday Morning): (Matthew 27:11–14; Mark 15:2–5; Luke 23:1–5; John 18:28–38)**

- Since the Sanhedrin council did not have the authority to issue a death sentence, they met to discuss plans for convincing Pilate to order Jesus' death. Very early Friday morning, the council was ready to present its case.
- As the soldiers led Jesus to Pilate's quarters, His accusers followed close behind. Along the way, the soldiers mocked Jesus and punched Him with their fists.
- When Jesus' accusers reached Pilate's quarters, they asked to meet with him outside. They did not want to go inside and become unclean, for it would have prevented them from participating in upcoming religious services.



Note: Why would entering Pilate's quarters make the religious leaders unclean? According to Jewish law, entering the home of a Gentile would cause a Jewish person to become ceremonially unclean—unworthy to stand before God and participate in religious ceremonies. If Jesus' accusers had entered Pilate's residence, they would not have been allowed to participate in the Passover celebration.

- When Pilate came outside, He asked about the charges against Jesus. Jesus' accusers exclaimed, "*This man has been leading our people astray by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is the Messiah, a king*" (Luke 23:2).
- Turning to Jesus, Pilate asked, "*Are You the King of the Jews?*" Jesus simply answered, "*It is as you say*" (Luke 23:3 NASB). After hearing the accusations, Pilate said Jesus had not done anything wrong.
- Frantic, Jesus' accusers quickly huddled to come up with new allegations. Desperate for a conviction, they said Jesus' teachings had caused major disturbances throughout Galilee and Judea.
- When Jesus' accusers mentioned Galilee, Pilate asked if Jesus was a Galilean. They answered "yes." Pilate then ordered the guards to take Jesus to Herod Antipas. Herod had jurisdiction over Galilee and happened to be in Jerusalem for the Passover celebration.

**Jesus' Trial Before Herod—(6:00 A.M.–9:00 A.M., Friday Morning): (Luke 23:6–12)**

- Having heard about Jesus' miracles, Herod was excited to see Jesus. He was looking forward to watching Jesus perform a few miracles.
- Herod asked Jesus a series of questions, but Jesus did not answer. Herod and his soldiers then prodded and mocked Jesus, but He remained silent.



The prophet Isaiah described the Messiah as a silent lamb being led to the slaughter. Isaiah wrote, *“He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth”* (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus willingly gave up His life as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. Jesus’ silence was not an admission of guilt, but rather the humble submission to God’s will.

- Herod soon became disinterested and ordered the guards to take Jesus back to Pilate.

**Pilate Orders Jesus’ Crucifixion—(6:00 A.M.–9:00 A.M., Friday Morning): (Matthew 27:15–31; Mark 15:6–20; Luke 23:13–25; John 18:39–19:16)**

- After the guards returned with Jesus, Pilate informed Jesus’ accusers that neither he nor Herod found the charges against Jesus serious enough for the death penalty.
- When Jesus’ accusers heard Pilate’s verdict, they incited the crowd to ask for Jesus’ death. The people began shouting, “Crucify Him!”



Note: Jesus’ trial was illegal according to both Jewish and Roman law for several reasons: 1.) The testimonies against Jesus were conflicting and unsubstantiated; 2.) He did not have access to legal counsel during the proceedings; 3.) Jesus was not allowed a defense; 4.) The trial was conducted very late at night in a special session of the Sanhedrin council; and 5.) Pilate himself said the charges against Jesus were insufficient for a death sentence.

- Pilate could not understand why Jesus’ own people were so vehemently against Him. He turned to Jesus and asked what He had done.
- Jesus answered, *“My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom”* (John 18:36). Hearing this, Pilate asked Jesus if He were a king.
- Jesus responded, *“You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true”* (John 18:37).
- When Jesus said His mission was to bring the world God’s Truth, Pilate sarcastically asked, *“What is truth?”* (John 18:38a).
- Turning to the crowd, Pilate again shouted out that Jesus was an innocent man. Pilate then received a note from his wife, which stated, *“Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night”* (Matthew 27:19b).
- Addressing the crowd, Pilate reminded the Jews of their tradition to ask for one prisoner to be released during Passover. In keeping with this tradition, Pilate said he would have Jesus flogged and then released.
- Jesus’ accusers were outraged. They stirred up the crowd, telling them to ask for Barabbas instead of Jesus.



Note: Who was Barabbas? He was a terrorist who had been arrested for leading an uprising against the Roman government. Barabbas advocated change through civil disorder and violence, while Jesus taught a message of peace. Barabbas had committed a criminal offense against the Roman government, while Pilate himself said Jesus was an innocent man.

- Pilate ordered Jesus’ flogging. In mock fashion, the soldiers dressed Jesus in king’s clothing and then hailed Him as King. In torturous humiliation, they beat, spit, kicked, and yelled obscenities.



Note: What is a flogging? In New Testament times, a flogging was a severe beating while in chains or shackles. Victims were whipped with a leather strap or metal spiked ball attached to an iron chain.

- After the flogging, Pilate brought Jesus back in front of the crowd so they could see He had been severely beaten. When the emotionally charged crowd saw Him, they cried out, “Crucify Him and release Barabbas!”
- Pilate announced that Jesus had been flogged and would now be released. Jesus’ accusers protested saying, “*If you release this man, you are not a friend of Caesar*” (John 19:12b). They insisted Jesus was guilty because He called Himself a king and said Caesar was their only king.
- As the crowd grew louder, Pilate realized Jesus had been set up, but did not want such a minor situation to grow into an uncontrollable riot. He finally gave in to the people’s demands.



Note: As the Roman governor, Pilate’s job was to maintain peace. According to the gospel writers, Pilate realized Jesus’ accusers arrested Him out of envy. (See Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10.) However, the situation was getting out of hand and Pilate did not want to lose control. A major uprising would have jeopardized his position or quite possibly his life.

- Pilate ordered his servants to bring him a bowl of water. In a symbolic gesture, Pilate washed his hands and said, “*I am innocent of this man’s blood. The responsibility is yours!*” (Matthew 27:24b). Pilate then let Barabbas go free and ordered his soldiers to crucify Jesus.



Note: In some manuscripts, Barabbas’ full name is shown as Jesus Barabbas when it appears in Matthew 27:16–17. Barabbas’ name means “son of the father.” In an ironic twist, the crowd had a choice between Jesus Barabbas, the ‘son of the father’ of this world and Jesus of Nazareth, ‘the Son of the Father’ God, Creator of the Universe. The crowd chose Jesus Barabbas, telling Pilate they wanted Barabbas released and Jesus executed. Barabbas was literally the first person whose life was saved as a result of Jesus’ death.



## RECOMMENDED BIBLE READING

Matthew 27:11–31 **Jesus’ Trial Before Pilate**

Isaiah 53:1–12 **Isaiah’s Messianic Prophecy**

## SECTION 5: THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION

**Jesus Nailed to the Cross—(9:00 A.M.–12:00 Noon, Friday Morning): (Matthew 27:32–44; Mark 15:21–32; Luke 23:26–43; John 19:17–27)**

- The soldiers forced Jesus to carry a heavy wooden cross. As Jesus made the difficult journey to a place called the “Skull Hill”—translated *Calvary* in Latin and *Golgotha* in Hebrew—crowds followed close behind.
- Along the way, the soldiers stopped and forced Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus’ cross the rest of the way. Simon was from North Africa and happened to be in town for Passover.
- When the soldiers arrived at Skull Hill, they offered Jesus wine mixed with bitter gall—a pain-reducing drug—but He refused to drink it.
- Two criminals convicted of robbery were also being crucified that day. The criminals and Jesus were each nailed to a cross.
- Before lifting Jesus’ cross in the air, the soldiers nailed a sign above His head. The sign read: “*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*” (John 19:19). It was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek so that everyone could read it.



Note: The official reason Pilate used for Jesus’ execution was written on the sign above His head—Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be a king. Jesus claimed a position, which belonged to Caesar alone. On the other hand, the Jews called for Jesus’ crucifixion because He claimed a title belonging only to God.

- At about 9:00 A.M. Friday morning, the soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross and hoisted it in the air. Jesus was in the center and the criminals were on each side.
- A large crowd watched as Jesus and the criminals suffered excruciating pain. In fulfillment of Scripture, the soldiers threw dice to determine which one of them would win Jesus’ clothing (See Psalm 22:18).
- The crowd shouted insults and ridiculed Jesus. His accusers said if Jesus were the Son of God, He would come down from the cross.



Note: Why didn’t Jesus come down from the cross? Jesus understood God’s Plan of Redemption and Salvation for humanity could only be accomplished through His death on the cross. Jesus knew His purpose on earth was to execute God’s Plan. If Jesus had come down from the cross, He would not have accomplished His mission—to save humanity from the power of sin. (See Hebrews 12:2.)

- From the cross, Jesus called out to God saying, “*Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing*” (Luke 23:34a).
- One of the criminals turned to Jesus and sarcastically said, “*So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!*” (Luke 23:39). The other criminal objected, saying the sarcastic remark showed a lack of reverence to God, for they deserved to die, but Jesus had done nothing wrong. He then asked Jesus to remember him in heaven. Jesus responded, “*I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise*” (Luke 23:43).
- Apostle John was standing nearby with Mary, Jesus’ mother. Several of Jesus’ faithful followers—all women—were also present.
- Looking down from the cross at John, Jesus instructed him to care for His mother. John accepted the responsibility and took care of Mary from that day forward.

**Jesus' Death—(12:00 Noon–3:00 P.M., Friday): (Matthew 27:45–56; Mark 15:33–41; Luke 23:44–49; John 19:28–37)**

- As the noon hour approached, darkness suddenly swept across the entire sky. There was no sunlight from noon until three o'clock.
- Jesus cried out in agony, "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*" which means "*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*" (Mark 15:34).
- Jesus knew the end was near. In fulfillment of Scripture, He said, "*I am thirsty*" (John 19:28). The soldiers soaked a sponge with wine and attached it to a stalk. Then they lifted the sponge next to Jesus' lips (See Psalm 69:21).
- As the soldiers wiped a wine-soaked sponge across Jesus' lips, he tasted it and then said, "*It is finished!*" (John 19:30a).



Note: What did Jesus mean when He uttered the words, "*It is finished?*" Jesus used the Greek word *teleo*, meaning "paid in full." By His death, Jesus paid the penalty in full for our sins. No other sacrifice would ever be needed again. (See Hebrews 9:12.)

- By three o'clock, the sky was totally dark. In a loud voice, Jesus shouted, "*Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!*" (Luke 23:46a).
- As Jesus hung His head and died, the curtain in the Temple separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place suddenly ripped apart.



Note: The curtain in the Temple was a thick piece of cloth, serving as a room-divider. It separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Only the High Priest was allowed behind the curtain and into the Most Holy Place. The High Priest entered only once a year on the Day of Atonement to offer a sacrifice for his and the people's sins. The Most Holy Place symbolically reminded the people that they were spiritually separated from God and in need of spiritual restoration. When Jesus died, the curtain ripped apart to symbolically show that access to God had been made possible through Jesus' death. We are no longer separated from God when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We can boldly enter into God's presence. (See Matthew 27:50–51; Hebrews 9:7–8; 10:19–22.)

- The earth trembled and shook violently, splitting rocks apart and opening tombs in the cemetery.
- Witnessing the earthquake and other supernatural events, the Roman soldiers exclaimed in awe, "*Truly this was God's Son!*" (Matthew 27:54b).
- Jesus and the two criminals were crucified on Friday. The religious leaders were anxious for all three victims to die before sundown, the beginning of the Sabbath.



Note: Why did the Jewish leaders want the victims to die before sundown? According to Jewish law, the religious leaders were prohibited from leaving dead bodies hanging on the cross overnight. However, they could not take them down after sundown because it was the beginning of the Sabbath. Taking the dead bodies down after sundown would be considered work, a violation of the Sabbath laws. (See Deuteronomy 21:22–23; Exodus 31:15; 34:21; Leviticus 23:3.)

- After discussing the situation, the religious leaders went to Pilate and asked him to speed up the deaths, so the bodies could be removed. Pilate agreed and ordered soldiers to break the three victims' legs to hasten their deaths.
- As the soldiers were carrying out their orders, they noticed Jesus was already dead, so they did not break His legs.

- One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with his sword as an extra precaution to ensure He was dead. When the soldier did this, Apostle John saw blood mingled with water flow from His side.



Note: According to experts, the blood mixed with water indicated Jesus' death was the result of a ruptured heart. Based on this explanation, Jesus died from a physically and emotionally broken heart.



In the Old Testament, the Passover lamb had to be perfect, without defects, and prepared with no bones broken. (See Exodus 12:5, 46; 1 Peter 1:18–19.) Jesus' death pictured Him as our Passover Lamb. He was perfect, without sin, and John's gospel carefully points out that Jesus' bones were not broken. (See John 19:33.) In a prophecy foreshadowing this event, King David wrote, "*For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken!*" (Psalm 34:20).

Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would be pierced for the people's sins. Apostle John witnessed Scripture unfold as the soldiers pierced Jesus in His side. (See Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34.) John explains, "*These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, 'Not one of his bones will be broken,' and 'They will look on the one they pierced'*" (John 19:36–37).

**Jesus' Tomb—(3:00 P.M. Friday to Saturday morning): (Matthew 27:57–66; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42)**

- After Jesus' death, Joseph, a very wealthy man from Arimathea, asked Pilate's permission for Jesus' body.
- Pilate confirmed Jesus was, in fact, dead and then allowed Joseph and Nicodemus to take Jesus' body. Nicodemus was the same man Jesus had previously talked to about being "born again."
- Although Joseph and Nicodemus were members of the Sanhedrin council, they disagreed with the members who brought charges against Jesus. They believed in Jesus, but had remained silent until His death.
- Joseph and Nicodemus carried Jesus' body to an empty tomb located near Skull Hill. Joseph had previously purchased the tomb for himself. After the crucifixion, he used it to bury Jesus. Several women followed the men to see where they buried Jesus.
- After placing Jesus' body in the tomb, Joseph and Nicodemus rolled a large stone in front of the entrance.



Old Testament Scripture prophesied about the Messiah's gravesite, ". . . *But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave*" (Isaiah 53:9b).

Scripture tells us that Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, who had prepared a tomb for his own burial. Since there was not enough time to carve a new tomb for Jesus before the Sabbath, Joseph used the tomb he had prepared for himself to bury Jesus. In doing so, Isaiah's prophecy came to pass, ". . . *he was put in a rich man's grave.*"

- The next day, Jesus' accusers remembered His statement about rising from the dead on the third day. They went to Pilate and asked him to place guards around the tomb so that Jesus' disciples could not steal His body and then claim He had risen from the dead.
- Saturday morning, guards were posted at the entrance of Jesus' tomb.

**He is Risen—(Early Sunday morning): (Matthew 28:1–15; Mark 16:1–11; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–10)**

- Early Sunday morning—before sunrise—Mary Magdalene and the other women went to the tomb to prepare Jesus’ body for burial.
- When the women arrived, they were surprised to discover the stone in front of the entrance had been removed.
- Mary Magdalene ran back and told Peter and John, *“They have taken the Lord’s body out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”* (John 20:2b).
- When Peter and John heard this, they jumped up and raced to the tomb. Looking inside, they noticed Jesus’ head covering and linen strips were lying on the ground. The linen had been used to wrap Jesus’ body. After verifying Mary’s story, the two disciples left puzzled.
- Mary Magdalene later returned to the tomb with the other women. To their amazement, an angel was inside. The angel said, *“Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead!”* (Mark 16:6).
- Mary Magdalene stayed near the tomb while the other women ran back to tell the disciples about the angel.
- As Mary stood at the tomb confused and weeping, she noticed a shadowy figure. At first, Mary did not recognize the Person standing in front of her, but soon realized it was Jesus. He told Mary to tell the others He was alive and then left.
- While the other women were running back to find the disciples, they met Jesus along the way. He greeted them and said, *“Don’t be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there”* (Matthew 28:10).
- When the guards at the tomb realized what had happened, they left and told the religious leaders that Jesus was missing from the tomb. Shocked and embarrassed, the religious leaders bribed the guards, instructing them to tell Pilate Jesus’ disciples stole His body while they were asleep.
- According to Matthew, *“The guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today”* (Matthew 28:15).

**Resurrection Appearances (Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 16:12–20; Luke 24:13–53; John 20:11–21:25)**

- As two of Jesus’ followers were walking to a village near Jerusalem, Jesus joined them and began explaining the Messianic prophecies in the Scriptures. The two men did not recognize Jesus.
- When the men reached their destination, they begged Jesus to come home with them. Jesus followed the men and joined them for a meal.
- As Jesus gave thanks for the bread, the men suddenly realized who He was. At that very moment, Jesus disappeared. The men got up and went into Jerusalem to find the disciples.
- The men found the disciples hiding in a room behind locked doors. While the two men were telling the disciples about their encounter, Jesus suddenly appeared in front of them.
- Jesus showed the disciples the nail wounds in His wrists and the wound in His side. After taking a deep inhale, Jesus gently blew His breath over them and said, *“Receive the Holy Spirit”* (John 20:22).

- Thomas was not in the room when Jesus appeared to the disciples. When the disciples later shared the news with Thomas, he refused to believe saying, *“I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side”* (John 20:25b).
- Eight days later, while the disciples were again meeting behind locked doors, Jesus suddenly reappeared. Thomas was present this time.
- Filled with compassion, Jesus walked over to Thomas and said, *“Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”* (John 20:27). In profound awe, Thomas declared Jesus as his Lord and God.
- The disciples later returned to Galilee. One day, seven of Jesus’ disciples decided to go fishing. While fishing in their boats, the disciples spotted a Man standing on the distant shore.
- At first, the disciples did not recognize the Man. When they realized it was Jesus, they raced back to shore.
- Jesus prepared breakfast for the seven disciples. After breakfast, Jesus turned to Simon Peter and asked, *“Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”* (John 21:15a).
- When Peter answered yes, Jesus told him to feed His sheep. Jesus asked Peter the same question two more times.
- Heartbroken that Jesus would doubt his love, Peter said, *“Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.”* Jesus said for a third time, *“Then feed my sheep”* (John 21:17c).



Note: Peter had denied Jesus three times. In a demonstration of God’s forgiving nature, Jesus did not ignore or withhold His love from Peter. Jesus confronted Peter, asking him three times if he loved Him. Jesus wanted Peter to commit and always remember he was responsible for feeding His sheep—the church of believers.

- Jesus later appeared to His disciples again in Galilee saying, *“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:18–20).



Note: Jesus commissioned His disciples and all future disciples to tell people the Good News. This is called the “Great Commission.” Those who believe in Jesus are commanded to go and make disciples.



## RECOMMENDED BIBLE READING

Matthew 27:57–28:20 **He is Risen!**

Psalm 16:7–11 **The Holy One Will Not Rot in the Grave**

Psalm 68:16–20 **Our God Saves!**



## MEDITATION & PRAYER

Paul tells about Jesus' resurrection appearances:

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”

(1 Corinthians 15:3–8 NIV)

Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank You so very much for Your Plan of Redemption and Salvation. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to save the world. I am truly grateful Jesus, who was perfect in every way, never lost sight of His mission. He showed us the way to You by providing an example of how to live a life that pleases You. I thank You for loving us so much that You offered Your Son as a sacrifice to atone for our sins. In a great exchange, Jesus took my sins and washed them away with His blood. I thank You that You did not leave Jesus in the ground, but on the third day raised Him from the dead. I thank You for the host of witnesses who testified about Jesus' resurrection appearances. I thank You for showing us there is no fear in death, for as surely as Jesus rose from the dead, I too will live again!

Amen



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Jesus pronounced God's judgment against seven sins the Pharisees commonly practiced. What were these seven sins? (See Matthew 23:13–30.)

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2. Why were the Jews outraged that Jesus would use the words, "I AM" to describe Himself?

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3. When Jesus predicted His death, the people said the Messiah was supposed to live forever. How did they know this?

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4. What lesson did Jesus teach when He washed His disciples' feet?

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5. When instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus said *"This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you"* (Luke 22:19). What is a covenant? What was God's old covenant with His people? How was it sealed or confirmed? What was God's new covenant? How was it sealed or confirmed? In what way is the new covenant better than the old covenant?

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6. Jesus said, *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."* What did Jesus mean by this?

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7. What did the Jews find Jesus guilty of? What was Pilate's official reason for ordering Jesus' crucifixion?

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8. Why didn't Jesus come down from the cross?

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## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

9. Jesus said, *"I am the True Vine."* What lesson did Jesus want you to learn from this statement? What additional steps can you take to stay connected to Jesus, the True Vine?

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11. After Jesus' arrest, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. What did you learn about human nature from Peter's denial? What did you learn about God?

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12. What was the difference between Judas and Peter's response to failure? How do you respond to failure?

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13. Review the Messianic prophecies listed in Appendix 7. Which of these prophecies used in this chapter are most meaningful to you? How do these prophecies affect your witness to others about Jesus?

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14. What does Jesus' crucifixion mean to you? His resurrection? In a prayer, thank God for what He did for you through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

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## CLOSING PRAYER

Job's declaration of a Redeemer:

“For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
And He shall stand at last on the earth;

And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,  
That in my flesh I shall see God,

Whom I shall see for myself,  
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
How my heart yearns within me.”

(Job 19:25–27 NKJ)

Dear Lord,

I thank You for Jesus Christ, my Redeemer. He is alive and watching over me. I thank You for revealing Truth to me and giving me an opportunity to live with You forever. I am eternally grateful for Your offer of Redemption and Salvation through Jesus Christ. I am so happy You have a very forgiving nature. When I confess my sins, You blot them out and don't remember them anymore. Because of Jesus, my life has meaning and I have Your guaranteed promise of eternal life. All praise, glory, and honor belong to You forever!

Amen