

Walking Through Holy Week: Jesus' Journey to the Cross

- The entire **life of Jesus** was a **prelude** to the events and teachings during His final week, especially **His death and resurrection**. One half of all four Gospels focus on the **final week of Jesus' ministry**, signaling that this is the **key** to understanding everything about Jesus' mission. They slow way down and absorb us in the details—especially from Friday to Sunday.

Holy Week:

- Sunday:** The **Triumphal Entry** of Jesus into Jerusalem on the day each Jewish family was to select their Passover lamb. Jesus enters through the “**Golden Gate**”—the gate of the Messiah, as a great crowd proclaims: “**Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!**” In less than a week many in that same crowd will shout: “**Crucify Him!**” (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19)
- Monday:** Jesus curses the **fig tree** for having leaves but no fruit, then cleanses the Temple, clearing the money changers out of the “**court of the Gentiles**,” declaring: “**My Father's House is to be a house of prayer for all people—but you have made it a den of thieves!**” The dye is cast. Both the Priests (Sadducees) and the Pharisees (Teachers of the law) determine to kill Jesus. (Matthew 21:12-19; Mark 11:12-18)
- Tuesday:** The **last day of public teaching and debate** as Jesus speaks in parables of Himself as God's Son, by whom all will be saved or judged. Jesus makes some of His most memorable statements as He faces down the religious leaders and thwarts every verbal trap they lay—finally pronouncing seven woes upon them (Matthew 21:23-23:39; Mark 11:27-12:34; Luke 20:1-21:4; John 12:20-50)
- Wednesday:** On the Mount of Olives, Jesus prophesies His **Second Coming and Final Judgment** and the events leading up to that Day. Jesus is **anointed** by Mary and Judas secretly agrees with the Chief Priests to **betray Jesus** for 30 pieces of silver. (Matthew 24:1-26:16; Mark 13:1-14:11; Luke 21:5-22:6; John 12:2-11)
- Thursday:** The disciples prepare the **Upper Room**. At the **Last Supper**, Jesus introduces the reality of the **New Covenant** (acceptance with God) established through the shedding of His blood. He points to Himself as the true **Vine**, teaches His disciples about the **Holy Spirit** and prayer His great final prayer. Then comes the agony of **Gethsemane**, where the fate of humanity hung in the balance as Jesus sealed His determination to drink the **cup** of divine judgment for our guilt. (Matthew 26:14-46; Mark 14:12-42; Luke 22:7-46; John 13:1-18:1)

- Friday:** The early morning [dead of night] **arrest** and **betrayal** by Judas' kiss, the triple **denial** by Peter, Jesus' illegal, mock **trial** before Caiaphas, then Pilate, then Herod. The **flogging** and the multiple **beatings**. The **crown of thorns**. Pilate's **judgment seat** and the crowd choosing **Barabbas**—and Caesar for their king. Then the **crucifixion** between two thieves. In those **six hours of suffering** (9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.) the **salvation of God** is offered to humanity.

There are seven declarations to Christ's innocence (His perfect righteousness), seven wounds on His body (His perfect sacrifice) and seven statements from the Cross (His perfect teaching). Jesus extends acceptance and assurance to a repentant **dying thief**. At mid-day it becomes midnight! Three hours of **supernatural darkness** signal Jesus' descent into the outer darkness of damnation: “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”

At 3:00 p.m. (the hour of the Passover sacrifice) Jesus dies as the “**Lamb of God**.” There is an **earthquake**, the centurion confesses his faith (“**Surely this was the Son of God!**”) and the **veil** is torn from top to bottom just as Jesus proclaims that salvation is accomplished: “**It is finished!**” After His death, Nicodemus and Joseph bury Jesus in a **new tomb** in a garden. (Matthew 26:47-27:61; Mark 14:43-15:41; Luke 22:47-23:56; John 18:2-19:42)

- Saturday:** The Jewish leaders break the Sabbath to insure that the **tomb sealed** and a **Roman guard** posted; as Jesus spends His final Jewish Sabbath “**resting**” in death. (Matthew 27:62-66; Luke 23:56)
 - Sunday:** Shortly before dawn on the “**first day**,” the stone of the tomb is rolled away by a mighty angelic hand. **Jesus steps forth in Resurrection power**, triumphant over sin, death and the devil. His resurrection is **God's confirmation** of Jesus' all-sufficient victory, assuring that entrance into God's eternal Kingdom is the present possession of all who trust in Him. The angels tell the women at the tomb: “**He is risen!**” Jesus appears to Peter alone, to the two on the Road to Emmaus, and to His disciples in the Upper Room. (Matthew 28:1-17; Mark 16:1-14; Luke 24:1-43; John 20:1-25; Romans 4:24-25)
- Walk this week with reverence and prayer. We are traversing Holy Ground.

“By this Gospel you are saved...
For I delivered unto you as of first importance that which I received:
that Christ Jesus died for our sins, according to Scripture, that
He was buried and He was raised on the third day,
according to the Scriptures.”
1 Corinthians 15:2-4