

Easter in the Context of Jesus's Story

The Story of the Final Stage of Jesus's Initial Entrance into History

by

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In January of 27 A.D. Jesus travelled from his home in Galilee to the Jordan River Valley. It was there that John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing. Jesus went in order that he himself might be baptized by John the Baptist. John had been told by God that the one upon whom his Spirit descended and remained was, in fact, the Messiah. The Messiah was the one before whom John was to go as a herald. At his baptism, John saw the Spirit descended upon Jesus and remain. So it was revealed to John that Jesus was the Messiah. John therefore identified Jesus as the Messiah to five of his disciples. Those five men became the nucleus of Jesus's band of followers.

After a quick trip to Galilee followed by a trip to Jerusalem for Passover, Jesus located in the Jordan River Valley with his new disciples, proclaiming the coming of the kingdom and baptizing in a parallel ministry to John the Baptist. Jesus engaged in this ministry for about a year, until John the Baptist was put in prison by Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea. When John was thrown in prison, Jesus decided to move back to Galilee and begin a ministry in that region. So, in about May of 28 A.D., Jesus traveled to Galilee by way of Samaria. For over a year, until July of 29 A.D., Jesus traveled from village to village throughout the region of the Galilee. In the earlier part of his ministry, he focused on proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of God as he performed many miraculous signs that captured the attention of the masses. Later in his ministry, he began to teach deeper truths, including some of the mysteries, or secrets, of the kingdom of God. Then, sometime around July of 29 A.D., Jesus climbed Mt. Hermon with four of his closest disciples. On the mountain, Jesus was met by Moses and Elijah who apparently were sent to encourage him and reinforce his resolve to endure the ordeal that lay before him. On that occasion, the four disciples who were with Jesus saw him physically transformed in a way that revealed the true glory and majesty of his role and identity. Jesus—knowing that the ordeal set before him was to go to Jerusalem and be crucified—came down the mountain resolved to go to his fate in Jerusalem.

While Jesus's ministry in the Galilee had heretofore attracted huge crowds of people. From this time on, Jesus kept his presence in Galilee rather quiet. He spent most of his remaining time in Galilee teaching and conversing with his closest disciples. He first made his way to his adopted home of Capernaum. And he remained there for about two months, quietly teaching his disciples.

The Jewish establishment had become increasingly hostile toward Jesus. The more Jesus did and the more he said, the more intent they were on getting rid of him. They had been determined to kill him for nearly a year. A year earlier, in the fall of 28 A.D. Jesus had healed a lame man in Jerusalem during the Feast of Booths, and Jesus had instructed the man to pick up his bed and walk. But it had occurred on the Sabbath. This particular lame man had apparently been very well-known in Jerusalem, having been a fixture in Jerusalem for about 40 years. So the event of his healing—and his breaking of the Sabbath—was noticed far and wide. For that reason, it alarmed and outraged the Jewish leaders. They could not tolerate that kind of example in their midst. As a reaction to that event, they determined that they wanted Jesus dead. So, now a year later, in the fall of 29 A.D., it was very dangerous for Jesus to set foot in Judea. So, when it came time for the Feast of Booths, it was not prudent for Jesus to travel to Jerusalem in public, travel-

ing in a caravan along with his fellow-Jews. So, Jesus quietly and secretly made his way to Jerusalem by way of Samaria. (This departure from Galilee for Jerusalem in the fall of 29 A.D. marked the last time Jesus would be in Galilee until after his resurrection.) The crowds and the hostile Jewish leaders expected to see Jesus at the feast. They looked intently for him, but they didn't see him. He entered Jerusalem in secret.

Though it was dangerous, half-way through the week-long festival, Jesus began to teach publicly. He created quite a stir and controversy. The masses argued about who Jesus might be. And he caused the Jewish leaders to grow more determined than ever to kill him.

When the Feast of Booths ended, Jesus did not return home to Galilee. He traveled to the region beyond the Jordan River, in the jurisdiction of Herod called Perea. There he commenced a whole new ministry. He traveled from village to village proclaiming the kingdom, calling people to repentance, and teaching them various aspects of the gospel. At one point, he enlisted the help of 70 or more of his disciples. He sent them out to go from village to village and to perform miraculous signs and proclaim the coming of the kingdom.

This ministry beyond the Jordan lasted for about 3 or 4 months. Sometime around February of 30 A.D. Jesus learned that his friend Lazarus, in Bethany near Jerusalem, was on the verge of death. Jesus delayed a couple of days, until Lazarus was dead, and then he traveled to Bethany. There he raised Lazarus from the dead. Bringing Lazarus back to life from the dead had a huge impact on everyone in the environs of Jerusalem. It was certainly the sort of thing that could induce people to follow Jesus. So, from the Jewish leaders' perspective, it was the last straw. Jesus had to die, and Lazarus had to die. The leaders met together to decide on a specific, concrete strategy for orchestrating his death.

Clearly, Jerusalem had become a dangerous place for Jesus. So Jesus and his disciples escape to Ephraim, a place they can hide out in the Judean wilderness. It would appear that they stayed there for about 6 weeks.

Finally, toward the end of March, in 30 A.D., Jesus and his disciples made a final trip to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. From Ephraim, they made their way to Jericho. While passing through Jericho, Jesus healed two blind men and spent the night with Zacheus, the tax-collector. In the morning, Jesus and his disciples made their way up the long climb from Jericho to Jerusalem.

PASSOVER WEEK – 1 / DAY 5 (Wednesday/Thursday)

On THURSDAY, the week before his crucifixion, Jesus and his disciples arrive in Bethany around sunset. Bethany—a village on the south-eastern slope of the Mount of Olives—was the home of Jesus's friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. It lay on the far side of the hill from the city of Jerusalem. It was just a short hike up and over the Mount of Olives to get to the city. Upon arriving in Bethany, Jesus was invited to dinner at the home of Simon the Leper. He was joined by his disciples as well as his friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Lazarus was the one whom Jesus had raised from the dead just two months earlier. At this dinner, Mary poured out a costly perfumed ointment on Jesus's feet and then wiped his feet dry with her hair. Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would eventually betray Jesus, was particularly disapproving of Mary's act. He grumbled that the ointment could rather have been sold so that the proceeds would go to the poor. The apostle John informs us that Judas's real motive was different from his stated objection. Judas was the disciple who had responsibility for the group's money box and had developed the practice of pilfering money out of it. Therefore, his real reason for objecting to Mary's pour-

ing the ointment on Jesus's feet was that—had she sold it and put the proceeds in the money box—he would have had a greater supply of money from which to pilfer.

When they had first arrived in Bethany, Jesus sent two of his disciples to fetch a donkey and her colt. By prior agreement, Jesus had arranged for the use of a donkey from its owner in a nearby village. Jesus was intent on making a statement. Specifically, he wanted to dramatize the point that he was entering Jerusalem in peace, and not in judgment. He was, one day, destined to come against Jerusalem in judgment and wrath. But that was not now. Now he was coming in peace. Therefore, he was not going to ride into Jerusalem on a war horse. He was going to ride into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. The two disciples did just as they were instructed, found the donkey and her colt, and led them back to Bethany where Jesus would be spending the night.

PASSOVER WEEK – 1 / DAY 6 (Thursday/Friday)

On FRIDAY, the week before his crucifixion, Jesus decided to enter into Jerusalem. Many people had already come to Jerusalem to cleanse themselves in preparation for the upcoming Passover. They were in a state of high anticipation, wondering whether Jesus would attend Passover. With Jesus's raising of Lazarus fresh on their minds, there was a widespread openness among the people to believe that Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah.

Jesus's disciples got the donkey and her colt that they had obtained the night before and led them to Jesus. They spread their garments over the back of the colt, which—in all likelihood—is tethered to the donkey, its mother. Then they led the donkey down the road to Jerusalem as Jesus rode atop the colt which followed behind. When the crowds of pilgrims saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem, they broke into songs of praise and lay palm branches down on the road before him. Apparently, they were expecting Jesus to finally take steps to commence his reign as king. They gave expression to this expectation by breaking into joyful songs of praise.

As Jesus crested the Mount of Olives and the city of Jerusalem came into view, he began to weep. The Jews were not receptive to the truth of who he was. They were about to reject him, not embrace him. As a consequence, God was going to bring judgment against Jerusalem and destroy it (in another forty years). Because Jesus knew this, he began to weep.

Eventually, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem and spent the day reconnoitering the scene at the temple. Perhaps he also taught some. As sunset approached, he returned to Bethany and spent the night there.

PASSOVER WEEK – 1 / DAY 7 (Friday/Saturday)

On SATURDAY, the weekly Sabbath of the week before Jesus's crucifixion, Jesus and his disciples did nothing noteworthy. They observed the Sabbath. Only one significant event is likely to have taken place on this day: Jesus's disciple, Judas Iscariot, approached the chief priests and offered that, for a certain sum of money, he would lead their soldiers to a place where they could apprehend Jesus without causing a riot. Judas, of course, usually knew where Jesus could be found.

PASSOVER WEEK / DAY 1 (Saturday/Sunday)

On SUNDAY, the first day of the week within which Jesus was crucified, Jesus entered the city early in the day. As he approached the city, he observed a fig tree that was not bearing fruit. He cursed it and then proceeded on into the city. Once he was in the city, Jesus went to the temple. He began to obstruct the functioning of the temple by driving the livestock away and by overturning the tables of the money-changers. This was the second time that Jesus had done such a thing. On the very first Passover after he began his public ministry, he did the same thing. On both occasions, he obstructed the functioning of the temple in order to make a specific point to

the Jewish people: because your hearts are not directed toward God, your going through the motions of worshipping him here in this temple does nothing but make a mockery of him. It would be better not to perform acts of worship here in the temple at all, than to do so from a heart that is far away from God. After he had performed this symbolic act of temporarily stopping worship at the temple, he proceeded to heal the blind and lame. Children began to honor and praise him with their chants. The Jewish leaders objected to their chants and wanted to silence the children. Jesus spoke up in the children's defense. At the end of the day—unless they returned once again to spend the night in Bethany—Jesus and his disciples retired to a secret hide-out that they had somewhere on the Mount of Olives.

PASSOVER WEEK / DAY 2 (Sunday/Monday)

On the next day, MONDAY, Jesus entered Jerusalem again. On the way into the city, his disciples noticed that the fig tree that Jesus had cursed the morning before had withered and died. They were surprised. Jesus used the opportunity to teach them about faith. Faith is not something quantifiable. The fig tree did not supernaturally wither and die because of the greatness of Jesus's faith. It withered and died because of the immeasurable power of God. God caused it, not Jesus. Jesus did not do something supernatural by the power of his faith. Only God can cause the supernatural. Faith is nothing more and nothing less than simply trusting God to do what he is going to do.

Jesus spent Monday in the temple. He taught, responded to questions posed by various Jewish leaders to trap him, and exhorted the people to believe.

As Jesus and the disciples were about to leave Jerusalem, some of his disciples commented on what a magnificent building the temple was. Jesus predicted that the entire structure was destined to be utterly destroyed in the relatively near future.

Jesus and his disciples retired once again to their secret hiding place. Located on the west-facing slope of the Mount of Olives, they could look across the valley at the temple. Sensing that climactic events were about to take place and pondering Jesus's prediction that the temple was going to be destroyed, a few of Jesus's disciples asked him to elaborate on future events. When would the temple be destroyed? When would the end of the age come about? When would the kingdom be established? Jesus responded to their questions and taught about future events in an extended discourse that has come to be known as the Olivet Discourse.

Jesus and his disciples spent the night in this secret hide-out. Meanwhile, the Jewish authorities are meeting together to plot out how they were going to kill Jesus.

PASSOVER WEEK / DAY 3 (Monday/Tuesday)

The next day, TUESDAY, Jesus once again entered Jerusalem. Presumably, he spent the day in the temple, teaching, exhorting, and responding to questions and challenges by his adversaries. While he was busy teaching, he sent two of the Twelve to go and make preparations for their Passover meal. The Passover meal would be held just after sunset, to begin the day of Passover proper.¹ Jesus had previously arranged for a room for the meal. So he instructed these two disci-

1. Typically, the Feast of Passover was considered the entire 8-day period that began with the day of Passover proper and then was followed by 7 days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In this year, Tuesday evening, after sunset, began the day of Passover proper. The Passover meal was to be held in the early part of the day of Passover. The Passover lamb was to be eaten in its entirety before Passover day proper came to an end. Now the first (day 1) and the last day (day 7) of the Feast of Unleavened Bread were designated Sabbath days. Since they were special Sabbaths that were connected to a Feast, and not weekly Sabbaths, they were referred to as "High [μεγάλη] Sabbaths." Hence, the day of Passover proper was also a day upon which one prepared for the High Sabbath that fell

ples to go and make all necessary preparations for the Passover meal.² It is noteworthy that this Passover meal was the only Passover meal that Jesus ever ate with the entire group of the Twelve. He would explicitly tell them during the meal that he had been very eager to eat this Passover meal with them.

PASSOVER WEEK / DAY 4 (Tuesday/Wednesday)

4a (first quarter of DAY 4) [6 pm, Tuesday > midnight, Wednesday]

On the following day, sometime after sundown,³ Jesus and his disciples gathered in the upper room, the room that Jesus had previously secured for their Passover meal. When they had all reclined at their tables to eat, Jesus played the role of a lowly house servant and proceeded to wash the feet of each and every one of his disciples. When he had finished washing their feet, he once again reclined at his table and began to exhort them to follow his example.

Jesus had engaged in meaningful performance art. He performed this act of foot-washing as a picture and example of the mindset that he wanted his disciples to adopt. They should be of such a mindset that they would always be willing to serve others, rather than serve themselves. That is what Jesus was about to do. By going to his death on the cross, Jesus was about to serve his disciples (along with the rest of mankind) in a much more dramatic way than by merely washing their feet. He was going to his death on the cross to serve others. At this time, Jesus was instructing his disciples to imitate his willingness to humbly serve others. They would soon understand what the willingness to serve others was about to require of Jesus.

As Jesus was exhorting them, he became quite disturbed and announced to the Twelve that one of them was about to betray him. Peter, being curious to know who Jesus meant, signaled for John to ask Jesus. Jesus, by dipping a morsel of bread in a sauce and sharing it with Judas, revealed to John that Judas was the one who would betray him. Soon after that, Judas got up to leave the meal. As he left, Jesus called after him, “What you must do, do quickly.”

As they continued eating, Jesus engaged the eleven that remained at the tables in a rather cryptic interchange about what the future held. In rather indirect terms, he spoke of his departure. He was no longer going to live among them. Sensing that Jesus was aware of some danger he was in, Peter pledged his willingness to die to defend Jesus. Jesus told Peter that that was not so. He predicted that, before the next dawn, Peter would have denied him on three separate occasions. He also began to articulate a promise to them. While he would be going away and would no longer be living among them, they did not need to be anxious. For he had asked the Father to send his Spirit of Truth to equip them for the role to which he had appointed them. Once Jesus had departed, God would send a *parakletos*, the Spirit of Truth. This Spirit of Truth would bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had done and all that Jesus had taught them. The Spirit of Truth would lead them into a comprehensive and accurate grasp of the truth that Jesus wanted his apostles to take to the world after he was gone.

At Jesus’s suggestion, they got up from the meal and began to make their way out of the city. They would go to their hideout on the Mount of Olives and spend the night there. As they made

on the following day. Any day upon which one prepared for the following day’s Sabbath was called the παρασκευή (the “Day of Preparation”).

2. Presumably making preparations included obtaining the Passover lamb that would be the centerpiece of the meal, and meeting all the religious requirements attached to preparing it.

3. Note that a day in the Jew’s calendar at that time began at sundown and ran to the following sundown. While in our calendar, Tuesday continues until midnight, in their calendar Tuesday sundown is the beginning of a new “day.”

their way out of the city, Jesus continued to teach and exhort his disciples. He taught them the importance of continuing to identify with and affiliate with him. Their eternal destiny hinged on their willingness to persist in their acknowledgement of the truth about who Jesus was and their persistence in living in keeping with that truth. He instructed them to have love for one another, as fellow-followers of him. He warned them that the world would hate them, just as it hated him. He spoke some more of the important role to be played by the Parakletos who would come after he was gone. In general, in view of the dark and troubling events that they were all about to face, Jesus sought to encourage his disciples. And finally, strictly for the sake of instructing his disciples, Jesus prayed out loud for them. When he had finished his prayer, Jesus led his disciples across the valley of the Kidron into a garden located on the slope of the Mount of Olives. Presumably, this garden (the Garden of Gethsemane) is the place that had been serving as their hideout for the past few days.

4b (second quarter of DAY 4) [midnight, Wednesday > 6 am, Wednesday]

In the wee hours of the morning (Wednesday morning), as his disciples began to sleep, Jesus became greatly troubled and removed himself away from his disciples to pray. He instructed some of his disciples that they too ought to be praying for themselves. But they were too sleepy and quickly fell asleep. As Jesus contemplated the torture and death that he knew awaited him, he became so anxious and stressed out that he began to perspire blood with his perspiration. Jesus wrestled with his fears over the course of many long minutes—even hours. Each time his fear rose up, he resolved it with his famous prayer, “Father, if possible, let this cup pass from me. But not my will but your will be done.”

As Jesus reached the end of his wrestling with God in prayer (sometime in the vicinity of 4:00 am), Judas—in an act of treacherous betrayal of Jesus—led a group of soldiers to where Jesus was hiding. This allowed the chief priests and rulers to apprehend Jesus in a spot that was away from all the crowds of the city, a spot where Jesus would be all by himself and unprotected. In spite of some very brief and ineffective resistance by some of his disciples, Jesus was taken into custody and led back into the city to the house of the current high priest, Caiaphas.

Somewhere around 4:30 am, Jesus was taken to be interrogated by Annas who was waiting at Caiaphas’s residence for just such an eventuality. Annas was the former high priest who continued to be the real power behind all of the high priests for many years after. In fact, he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the current high priest. Annas conducted the initial interview of Jesus. Presumably, his agenda was to gain information from Jesus that would allow him to devise a strategy for convincing the other members of the Sanhedrin that Jesus was guilty of an offense punishable by death. It would seem that Jesus did not give Annas any particularly helpful information, so Annas eventually gave up and sent Jesus to Caiaphas’s residence, where various key members of the Sanhedrin had been gathered.

Meanwhile, as Jesus was being taken to be interviewed by Annas, John and Peter had followed Jesus and the arresting soldiers to the house of Caiaphas. Now John was known by the high priest and his household. So, when he came to the gate into the courtyard of the house, the servant girl who kept the gate recognized him and permitted him to enter. But Peter, coming along behind John, was not permitted entry by the servant girl. John, seeing that Peter was locked outside, returned to the gate, said something to the servant girl, and Peter was allowed to enter with John.

As Jesus was being interrogated by Annas, Peter and John joined a group of servants and officers who were warming themselves around a fire in the middle of the courtyard. Eventually, one of the servant girls who was warming herself around the fire noticed Peter and examined him

closely in the light of the fire. She thought she recognized him to be one of Jesus's disciples. She confronted Peter, asking him whether he wasn't one of Jesus's followers. Peter denied it, swearing that he was not. Others around the fire joined in and pressed the claim, Every time one of them accused him of being with Jesus, Peter vehemently denied it. In the midst of this flurry of denials, a rooster crowed for the first time that morning.

Then, because he had come under such close and uncomfortable scrutiny around the fire, Peter left the fire and went to stand under the porticoes that bounded the courtyard. He was hoping to remain hidden in the shadows. It was now somewhere in the vicinity of 5:00 am. A little while later, another servant girl saw Peter standing out under the portico and said to others who were in the vicinity, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Peter swore that he did not even know Jesus and he vehemently denied any association. This was the second occasion that night on which Peter denied any connection to Jesus.

As Peter was standing under the porticoes (somewhere around 5:00 am), Caiaphas began to conduct a hasty, sham trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin—or at least part of it—had been called together for that specific purpose. Through the evil machinations of the chief priests, several witnesses were brought forth to give false, slanderous testimony against Jesus. But none of the testimony proved sufficiently convincing to the Sanhedrin. Eventually, two witnesses came forward to say that Jesus had claimed that he could destroy the temple and then rebuild it in three days. The high priest attempted to provoke Jesus to answer this particular charge against him, but Jesus remained silent.

In exasperation, the high priest simply put it to Jesus directly, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God." By his response, Jesus made it clear that he did believe that he was the Messiah. Immediately, the high priest stood up, tore his robes, and accused Jesus of blasphemy. He then put it to the gathered Sanhedrin, "You have heard this blasphemy yourselves, what do you think?" They responded, "He deserves to die." And they all began to mock Jesus and to strike him and physically abuse him.

As dawn began to break (somewhere nearing 6:00 am), Peter returned to the warmth of the fire in the middle of the courtyard. As Peter warmed himself at the fire, the Sanhedrin, outraged at Jesus's blasphemous claim that he was the Messiah, plotted how they might secure a death sentence for Jesus, for Rome did not permit the Jews to execute anyone. They decided that they would have to go before the Roman procurator, Pilate, and make a case for sedition against Rome.

As the conspirators were inside Caiaphas's house, devising their plot against Jesus, Peter was outside warming himself by the fire. Another man who was warming himself around the fire noticed Peter's Galilean accent. Once again, he began to press the claim that Peter was one of Jesus's disciples. And once again, Peter vehemently denied it. As he did so, a rooster crowed for the second time that morning. And just as Peter swore that he didn't even know Jesus, Jesus—who was now being led over to the Praetorium to stand trial before Pilate—exited the room where his trial by the Sanhedrin had taken place and entered the courtyard. Jesus turned and looked at Peter by the fire. As their eyes met, Peter remembered what Jesus had predicted several hours earlier: "Before a rooster crows a second time this day, you will deny me three times." At that point, Peter left the high priest's house and went away and wept bitterly.

4c (third quarter of DAY 4) [6 am, Wednesday > noon, Wednesday]

Early in the morning (somewhere around 7 am) the conspirators from the Sanhedrin led Jesus to the Praetorium, the place where Pilate stayed when he was in Jerusalem. The "trial" before Pilate consisted of several distinct episodes that spanned about 2 hours in time. In order to per-

suade Pilate to kill Jesus, these Jewish leaders needed to convince Pilate that Jesus posed a threat to the rule of Rome. When they reached the Praetorium, Jesus was taken inside, but the Jewish leaders refused to enter. It was the day of Passover and—by the command of *Torah*—the Passover lamb had to be completely consumed by the end of the day. Hence, these Jewish leaders still had some Passover lamb that they were religiously required to eat. But they would not be able to fulfill this religious obligation if they were unclean. So, it was imperative that they keep themselves ritually clean so that they not defile the Passover. For that reason, they were adamant that they could not enter into the Gentile Pilate’s dwelling and make themselves unclean. To accommodate their religious scruples, Pilate came outside to them.

Pilate inquired what charge they were making against Jesus and why they did not want to try him themselves. They leveled a number of charges against Jesus. Most notably, that he forbade people from paying taxes to Caesar and that he claimed to be the Messiah, the king of the Jews. And the only reason that they did not try Jesus themselves is that Jesus’s offense was a capital offense, and they did not have permission from Rome to put anyone to death.

After hearing their accusations, Pilate then went back inside the Praetorium to interview Jesus himself. He confronted Jesus with the various charges that the Jewish leaders had brought against him. To Pilate’s utter amazement, Jesus showed no concern to answer all the various charges leveled against him. To Pilate’s question, “Are you a king?” Jesus responded that, though he was in fact a king, his kingdom was no threat to Pilate and Rome. It was not his destiny to establish a kingdom in the midst of the present established order. His purpose in the present moment was simply to reveal the Truth to the world.

While inclined to see Jesus as naive and idealistic, Pilate saw nothing in Jesus that made him deserving of death. So he went out to the Jewish leaders and told them as much.

The Jewish leaders were very unhappy with Pilate’s judgment. They pressed him further. “Jesus is a threat to Rome. He is a real trouble-maker. He has been stirring up the people from Galilee all the way to Judea.”

When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he ordered Jesus to be taken to Herod, who was in Jerusalem for Passover. Herod was eager to see Jesus. He was hoping that Jesus would perform a miracle for him. He questioned Jesus for quite some time, but Jesus remained silent. He said nothing, even as the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of all sorts of evil before Herod.

Herod and his soldiers then proceeded to humiliate Jesus. They mocked him contemptuously and dressed him in purple robes. After abusing him, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate with the message that he found nothing in Jesus that deserved death.

When Jesus had returned from his interview with Herod, Pilate had Jesus scourged and then presented him to the Jewish leaders dressed in the purple robes that Herod had put on him. He also had thorns twisted into a crown placed on his head. He mockingly invited the Jewish leaders to behold their King. Then, he announced for a second time that he found Jesus innocent. Neither he nor Herod could find anything in Jesus that would make him guilty of a capital offense. He proposed that he would punish Jesus some more and then release him.

The Jews objected strongly to Pilate’s judgment and to his decision to let Jesus go. “Crucify him,” they shouted.

By this time, a crowd had gathered outside the Praetorium and the crowd had begun to ask Pilate if he was going to follow the tradition that he had followed for a number of years—namely, was he, on the occasion of the Passover, going to set free a prisoner of the crowd’s own choosing. Pilate saw in the crowd’s request a potential solution to his impasse with the Jewish

leaders. Thinking that perhaps the crowd would have a different agenda from the Jewish leaders—who Pilate judged to be simply envious of Jesus—he proposed to the crowd that he set Jesus free for Passover that year. But, spurred on and manipulated by the chief priests, the crowd rejected Pilate’s proposal to free Jesus and they demanded the release of the insurrectionist, Barabbas, instead. Pilate asked them, “So what do you want me to do with Jesus, the one you call King of the Jews?” They shouted, “Crucify him!” The chief priests and rulers and people all cried out, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas!”

Pilate, not happy with their response, attempted to address the crowd again, but they kept drowning him out with shouts of “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

When Pilate finally got a chance, he asked, “What evil did this man do? What makes him deserving of death?” For the third time, Pilate announced his own judgment in the matter, “I find nothing in Jesus worthy of death.”

But both the crowd and the Jewish leaders kept insisting that Jesus be crucified. So, in exasperation, Pilate responded, “You crucify him. I find him innocent.” In response, the Jewish leaders explained that Jesus had committed blasphemy, calling himself the Son of God. Such blasphemy was an offense that was punishable by death according to their law. And—as they had already reminded Pilate—the Jews did not have Rome’s permission to put anyone to death.

Something about the title “Son of God” created some fear in Pilate. He went back inside the Praetorium to question Jesus a little more. When Jesus wouldn’t answer his questions, Pilate threatened him, reminding him that he had the authority to release him or to kill him. Jesus responded to Pilate’s threat, “You would have no authority over me at all if God had not given it to you. Therefore, I do not blame you. I blame those who handed me over to you.”

After this session with Jesus, Pilate was as eager as ever to find a way to release Jesus. Sometime around 8 am, Pilate took his seat on his *bema*, his Judgment Seat, placed on “The Pavement” (*Gabbatha*) to pass final judgment. As he was sitting on the Judgment Seat, his wife sent word to him that, because of a dream she had had during the night, he should have nothing to do with “that righteous man.”

So Pilate raised the issue one more time, “Whom should I release to you?” The gathered crowd of Jews, spurred on by the chief priests and rulers, kept insisting that Barabbas be released and Jesus crucified. Still Pilate hesitated. The Jewish leaders warned him, “If you set Jesus free, you are pitting yourself against Caesar.”

Pilate made one last attempt to free Jesus. Seated on the judgment seat on *Gabbatha*, he presented Jesus to the crowd with the introduction, “Here is your king!” The crowd responded, “Crucify him!” Pilate objected, “But what evil has he done?” The crowd shouted over and over again, “Crucify him!” Pilate asked, “Should I crucify your king?” The chief priests responded, “We have no king but Caesar.”

Pilate could see that he was getting nowhere with the crowd. In fact, there was an increasing danger of riot. So, he asked for a bowl of water, washed his hands in the sight of everybody there, and announced, “I am innocent of this man’s blood.” The crowd of people responded, “His blood will be on us and upon all our children.”

So, worn down by the crowd’s sheer determination to see Jesus crucified, Pilate passed sentence on Jesus and handed him over to his soldiers to be crucified. He ordered that Barabbas be released.

The soldiers took Jesus inside the Praetorium and gathered the entire Roman cohort around him. They stripped him naked and put a scarlet robe upon him. They put thorns that had been twisted into a crown upon his head and placed a reed in his right hand. They then knelt down before him and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They spit on him and then took the reed and beat him on the head with it. After they had finished mocking him, they took the scarlet robe off of him, put his own garments back on him, and led him away to be crucified.

As was typical, the Romans required Jesus to carry the cross to his own crucifixion. Being weakened by the scourging and beatings he had received, Jesus was unable to carry his cross the whole distance. So the Roman soldiers pressed into service a bystander from Cyrene named Simon, forcing him to carry Jesus’s cross for him. A large procession of people, including women who were mourning and lamenting him, followed them to a place called Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. Jesus was offered some wine mixed with a spice. He tasted it, but then declined to drink it. At about 9 am, the soldiers proceeded to nail him to the cross and raise it up to crucify him upon it. Jesus addressed God, “Father, forgive them; for they don’t know what they are doing.” Seemingly, he was asking God to remember his commitments to the people of Israel and not to hold this evil, unjust act against them. When they had finished raising him up on the cross, they divided up the garments they had taken off of him, casting lots for the simple seamless garment they could not divide. And they sat to watch over him. Against the objection of the Jewish leaders, Pilate had ordered a sign to be placed above Jesus’s head on the cross. Written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, the sign read, “Jesus the Nazarene, The King of the Jews.”

Two other men were being crucified alongside of Jesus—one on his right and one on his left. They were insurrectionists whom the Romans had captured.

As Jesus hung on the cross, passers-by stopped to hurl abuse at him and mock him. The chief priests, scribes, and elders mocked him as well. Various taunts were hurled at him, “Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God.” “You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself.” “He saved others,” they said, “if he is the Messiah that he claims he is, let him save himself.”

Even one of the insurgents being crucified alongside of him began to mock him, “Aren’t you supposed to be the Messiah? Then save yourself and us.” The other insurgent rebuked the first man for his insolence, “We deserve what we are getting; but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he turned to Jesus, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!” And Jesus responded to him, “Today, I can truly tell you, ‘You will be with me in Paradise.’”

4d (fourth quarter of DAY 4) [noon, Wednesday > 6 pm, Wednesday]

Beginning at noon and lasting until about 3 pm, a deep darkness came over the entire land as the sun became totally obscured by some unusual atmospheric phenomenon. Standing near to the foot of the cross were his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus noticed his mother standing there, alongside John (the apostle), he said to his mother, “Woman, behold your son.” And to John he said, “Behold your mother!” From that hour John took Mary, Jesus’s mother, into his own household.

At about 3 pm Jesus cried out in a loud voice “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” A little later he said, “I am thirsty,” and someone at the base of the cross reached a sponge filled with sour wine up to his mouth and he drank it. Sometime later, Jesus let out a loud cry, “It is finished. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” Then he died. At that moment, the earth shook, the rocks were split, and the veil in the temple—the one that separated the holy of holies from the holy place—ripped from top to bottom. Also, a number of tombs were opened. (And, as

a result, later—after Jesus’s resurrection—the bodies of many believers were brought back to life from the dead and they entered the holy city and appeared to many people.)

When the centurion in command over the crucifixion witnessed all the unusual things that had transpired, he and the soldiers with him were awestruck. He began praising God and saying, “Certainly this man must have been the Son of God. He most certainly was a righteous man.”

All of Jesus’s followers and the women who had come down from Galilee with him stood at a distance and observed all these things as they transpired.

The Jewish leaders were anxious to get the bodies of all three men off the cross. The next day was a Sabbath day—it was a High Sabbath since it was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—and according to their law it would make the land unclean to have a dead body hanging on a cross. Therefore, they asked Pilate if he might hurry up the dying process by breaking the bones of their legs. Pilate consented and ordered the soldiers to hurry their deaths. They broke the legs of the two insurrectionists, but when they came to Jesus, they did not break his legs for it appeared that he was already dead. To be sure, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and blood and water came out, indicating that death had already occurred.

For religious reasons, Jesus had to be in the tomb by sunset. And that was only a couple of hours away. Joseph of Arimathea—a ruler of the Synagogue who had been a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one out of fear of the Jewish leaders—approached Pilate and sought permission to take the body of Jesus away to bury it. Nicodemus was the Pharisee who had come to Jesus by night on Jesus’s very first visit to Jerusalem after he began his public ministry. He was also a member of the Sanhedrin. He joined Joseph. He brought 100 pounds of a myrrh and aloes mixture. Joseph and Nicodemus took Jesus’s body and, in accord with the burial customs of the Jews, they bound it in linen wrappings with the mix of spices that Nicodemus had brought. Joseph had a new tomb that he had just had dug into the bedrock in a garden nearby to the place of Jesus’s crucifixion. Because they were in a hurry to get Jesus into the tomb before sundown, they laid Jesus’s body in Joseph’s nearby tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the wife of Alphaeus Clopas (the mother of Joses) had observed Jesus’s burial from a distance so that they might know where Jesus was buried.

PASSOVER WEEK, DAY 5 (Wednesday/Thursday)

On the next day, THURSDAY, very little happened. This was the very first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And as such, it was a sabbath day, a High Sabbath.⁴ Only one thing of significance happened on this day. The Jewish authorities, with Pilate’s permission, put a seal on Jesus’s tomb and secured it with an armed guard. Aware of Jesus’s claim that he would be raised from the dead, they wanted to ensure that no one would come and steal Jesus’s body and falsely report that he had been raised from the dead. By sunset on this day (Thursday), Jesus had been dead and in the tomb one night and one day.

PASSOVER WEEK, DAY 6 (Thursday/Friday)

The following day, FRIDAY, was the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—it was the day following the High Sabbath that began the Feast. For reasons of which we cannot be certain, the women disciples who had come down from Galilee were intent on preparing Jesus’s body for burial. Either they were somehow unaware that Nicodemus and Joseph had already prepared his body for burial, or they had no confidence that Nicodemus and Joseph had done a proper job. But, for whatever reason, they intended to go and prepare Jesus’s body for burial. They

4. See note 1. above.

spent this day, Friday, going to the market and obtaining all the supplies and materials that they would need to properly prepare Jesus's body. The women specifically mentioned as those who bought the necessary spices and supplies were Mary Magdalene, Salome (the sister of Mary, Jesus's mother), and Mary, the mother of James (who is also known as Mary the wife of Alphaeus or Clopas). It evidently consumed all the daylight hours to complete their task, for they did not even attempt to go to Jesus's tomb on that particular day. They knew they would have to wait for the next available opportunity (which would not come until the day after the next day). At sunset on this day, Friday, Jesus had been dead and in his tomb for two nights and two days.

PASSOVER WEEK, DAY 7 (Friday/Saturday)

The following day, SATURDAY, was a weekly Sabbath. Their religious obligation to observe the Sabbath kept the women (and anyone else) from accomplishing anything significant on this day. Hence, no events are recorded as having occurred on this Saturday. By sunset of this day, Saturday, Jesus had been dead and in his tomb for three nights and three days.

PASSOVER WEEK + 1 / DAY 1 (Saturday/Sunday)

1a (first quarter of DAY 1) [6 pm, Saturday > midnight, Sunday]

Sometime the following night—probably sometime between sundown and midnight—God raised Jesus from the dead, bringing him back to life. Either subsequently, or at the same time that God raised Jesus from the dead, God appeared to the soldiers guarding Jesus's tomb in a visible form. He manifested himself as one having the appearance of lightning and having snow-white clothes. He descended to the tomb, rolled the stone away from the tomb's entrance, and sat on the stone. As he did so, he caused a significant earthquake that rolled the stone back, away from the entrance to the tomb. With the stone rolled away from the entrance, access to the inside of the tomb was now possible. The soldiers that had been posted to keep guard at the tomb were petrified with fear. They fell to the ground like dead men. Eventually they all fled, leaving the tomb unguarded.

1b (second quarter of DAY 1) [midnight, Sunday > 6 am, Sunday]

Sometime just before sunrise on Sunday, a group of women made their way to the tomb where they had seen Joseph and Nicodemus place Jesus. This group of women consisted of (1) Mary Magdalene, (2) Salome (the sister of Jesus's mother and the mother of John and James, who were cousins of Jesus as well as two of his closest disciples), (3) Mary, the wife of Alphaeus or Clopas (and the mother of James the Lesser and possibly Levi, or Matthew, two of Jesus's disciples), (4) Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward. But the group consisted of other unidentified women as well (including, perhaps, Susanna). Interestingly, Mary the mother of Jesus does not seem to be among this group of women.

Due to the heavy spices that would have impeded their travel, the group of women apparently divided into two distinct groups. The first group went on ahead of the others to go to work solving the problem of how they would move the stone in order to gain entrance into the tomb. The second group lagged behind, carrying the heavy bag of spices and other materials needed to prepare Jesus's body for burial. As best we can determine, the first (early) group of women consisted of (1) Mary Magdalene, (2) Joanna, and (3) Mary, the wife of Alphaeus or Clopas (the mother of James and Joses). The second (later) group of women consisted of Salome (the sister of Jesus's mother and the mother of James and John) along with some other unidentified women (possibly including Susanna).

The first (early) group of women arrived at the tomb just as the sun was rising and found the stone already rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. They entered the tomb. They were surprised by a young man dressed in a white robe sitting to their right. He spoke to them: "Do not be amazed. I know you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. But he is risen. He is not here." Pointing to the shelf cut into the rock where Jesus's body had been laid, he said, "Look, here is the place where they laid him. Go and tell Peter and the other disciples that he will be going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you." This first group of women, trembling and astonished, fled the tomb. They ran back to the place where the disciples were all gathered together in order to tell them what they had just seen and heard. But they did not say anything to anyone else along the way. They were too fearful to say anything to anyone they did not know and trust.

In the meantime, the second (later) group of women finally arrived at the tomb, carrying their spices. They too found the stone rolled away from the tomb's entrance and entered the tomb. The tomb was empty. While they stood in the empty tomb, perplexed by what they saw, two men in dazzling clothing were suddenly standing beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground before them. The men said to them, "Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here. He has been raised. Remember what he taught you while he was still in Galilee? He told you that the Son of Man was to be delivered into the hands of sinful men and crucified. And that, then, on the third day he would afterwards be raised up again from the dead." The women remembered that Jesus had predicted this, and they ran from the tomb to where the disciples were gathered. When they arrived, the first group of women was already there and they were telling the gathered disciples about the empty tomb and the message that had been delivered to them by the angel. The later group of women added their report to that of the first group. All of the accounts of these women seemed like nonsense to the gathered disciples. They did not tend to believe them.

However, Peter and John decided to check things out for themselves. Mary Magdalene, with some of the other women, led Peter and John back to the location where they knew Jesus had been buried. When they arrived, John stooped and looked inside the tomb. He did not see the body of Jesus. He saw only the linen wrappings in which Jesus's body had been wrapped. Peter, coming up behind John, stooped, looked inside, and saw the same thing. Peter then entered the tomb. Inside, he observed the linen wrappings, but he also saw the face-cloth, rolled up in another place all by itself. John then entered the tomb after Peter. He saw what Peter had seen, and then he finally believed what Jesus had been teaching them all along. Up until then, none of them had understood the Scriptures that taught that the Messiah must rise from the dead. Peter and John then left the tomb and returned to their own dwellings.

After Peter and John left, Mary Magdalene, and the other women with her, lingered behind at the tomb. Mary began weeping and, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb. There she saw two angels in white, sitting on the shelf where the body of Jesus had been laid. One was sitting where Jesus's head had been; the other was sitting where Jesus's feet had been. They spoke to Mary, "Woman, why are you weeping?" Mary said, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Once she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing behind her. But she did not know that he was Jesus. Jesus said, "Why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Because Mary thought that Jesus was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, please tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" At that, she recognized him, turned toward him, and said, "My Teacher!" Mary and the other women grabbed onto Jesus's feet and worshipped him. Jesus

responded, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. Go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am going to ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God.’ Do not be afraid. Take word to my brothers to depart for Galilee. They will see me there.”

Then Mary and the other women returned to where the disciples were gathered and reported that they had seen the Lord himself and told them what Jesus had said to them.

Sometime later that morning Jesus appeared to Peter. We know nothing about the particulars of this encounter. We only know that it happened.

Meanwhile, while all these things were taking place, some of the guards who had fled the tomb when the angel of the Lord dramatically rolled the stone away from the entrance made their way to the chief priests and reported to them all that had occurred. Sometime later that morning, the chief priests assembled certain members of the Sanhedrin and decided to bribe these soldiers. In exchange for a large sum of money, the soldiers were instructed to claim that Jesus’s disciples had come by night and stolen his body. The specific lie that these soldiers were bribed to spread persisted for a long time afterward.

1d (fourth quarter of DAY 1) [noon, Sunday > 6pm, Sunday]

Sometime about noon, a disciple named Cleopas and another unidentified disciple were traveling from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus, about a 7 mile journey from Jerusalem. As they walked, they discussed the events of that day. As they were talking, Jesus himself drew near to them and began traveling with them. Neither man recognized Jesus. “What were you talking about?” Jesus said. They stopped and stood still, being overtaken by the horror and sadness of that day’s events. Cleopas responded to Jesus, “Are you the one and only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have happened here in these days?” Jesus responded, “What things are you talking about?” The men responded, “The things surrounding Jesus the Nazarene. He was a prophet, mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people. We had been expecting that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. But the chief priests and rulers delivered him up to the Romans to be sentenced to death. They crucified him. Three days have passed since all these things transpired. Now, early this morning, some women among us went to the tomb where Jesus had been laid and they did not see his body. They said they encountered some angels who told them Jesus was alive. Then, some of the men with us went to the tomb and found it to be exactly as the women had reported. Jesus’s body was not there.”

Jesus then responded to the two men, “Are you foolish and slow of heart, since you do not believe all that the prophets have said? Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer just these things before he would enter into his glory?” Then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus explained the various things in the Scriptures that pertained to the fate of the Messiah.

As they approached the village of Emmaus, Jesus acted like he was going to keep traveling. But the two disciples urged him to stay with them since it was getting so late in the day. So Jesus went in to stay with them.

They served him dinner, and when he had reclined at table with them, he took some bread, blessed it, broke it, and handed it to them. As he was doing so, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him to be Jesus. But just as they recognized him, he immediately disappeared from their sight. The disciples said to one another, “Were our hearts not burning within us when he was expositing the Scriptures to us?”

It was very late in the afternoon. They got up that very hour from the table and traveled back to Jerusalem. They arrived around sunset and found the eleven and the other disciples all gathered together. The eleven reported to Cleopas and his friend that Jesus had, in fact, been raised

from the dead. He had appeared to Simon Peter, they reported. Then Cleopas and the other man told the gathered disciples about their encounter with the risen Jesus.

As these two men were telling their story, Jesus himself appeared, standing in the midst of them all, and greeted them. The disciples were frightened. They thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do you have doubts in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see that I do.”

They still found it hard to believe—because it was too good to be true—so Jesus asked them if they had anything to eat. They gave him a piece of boiled fish and he ate it in front of them.

Then Jesus said to them, “I told you before that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” He then proceeded to lead them into an understanding of the Scriptures. He concluded his teaching with this: “Thus is it written—the Messiah must suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day and then repentance for the forgiveness of sins must be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning here in Jerusalem. You are witnesses to these things. Just as the Father sent me, I am now sending you.” At that point he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you understand that an individual’s sins are forgiven, their sins have indeed been forgiven.” Jesus was reassuring them that God was going to equip them for the task that was being given to them to do.

Significantly, Thomas (also known as Didymus) was not present on this occasion. When the other disciples reported what they had seen and heard, Thomas was dubious. He said, “Unless I see the marks of the nails in his hands and put my fingers into those marks, and unless I can put my hand into the wound in his side, then I cannot believe that he is Jesus risen from the dead.”

PASSOVER WEEK + 2 / DAY 2 (Sunday/Monday)

After eight more days, the disciples were once again gathered together inside the room where they congregated. This time, Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut and locked, Jesus suddenly stood in the midst of them and greeted them. He turned to Thomas and said, “Put your finger here. Feel and see the marks in my hands and put your hand here in the wound on my side. Do not be unbelieving. Believe.” Thomas responded, “My Lord and my God.” Jesus then said to him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet they nevertheless believe.”

THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS

Sometime after the incident in which Jesus proved himself to Thomas, Jesus’s disciples all returned to Galilee, in obedience to his instructions. Over the next month or so, Jesus appeared several more times to his disciples. He provided them with several convincing proofs that he was alive from the dead, and he taught them various important things about the kingdom of God. With respect to most of those occasions, we have no record of exactly what occurred. In fact, we have records of only two such occasions.

On one of those occasions, the eleven disciples had proceeded to an appointed place on a mountain in Galilee. Jesus appeared to them there and the disciples worshipped him. However, some remained dubious, not fully convinced that they understand exactly what was happening. On this occasion, Jesus proclaimed to them, “All authority pertaining to heaven and to earth has been given to me. Therefore, as you go, make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have taught you. And look, I am with you throughout all the days, even up to the end of the age.”

On the other occasion, several of Jesus's disciples were fishing on the Sea of Galilee. They were Simon Peter, James, John, Thomas (Didymus), Nathanael, and two other unidentified disciples. After having fished all night, they had caught nothing. As the sun rose, Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples could not see who it was. Jesus spoke to them, "You didn't catch anything, did you?" They said "no." Jesus then said to them, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat. You will get a catch there." They did so, and as they began to haul the net in, there were so many fish in the net that they could not lift it into the boat. John then realized who the man on the shore had to be. He said, "It is the Lord." So Peter jumped into the water and began to swim to shore. The others drug the net full of fish to shore using their little boat, for they were not too far out from shore. When they got to land, they found that Jesus had started a charcoal fire. Jesus proceeded to fix a breakfast of bread and fried fish for them.

After breakfast, Jesus had an interaction with Peter. He gave Peter a chance to reaffirm his love for him and he instructed him to shepherd the followers of Jesus. He then went on to predict the nature of Peter's death. Peter was destined for imprisonment and execution because of his connection with Jesus. As Jesus was telling him that, Peter saw John following them along the beach. He asked, "What will become of him?" Jesus responded, "What if his destiny is to remain alive until I return? How does that concern you?"

After several weeks of occasional encounters with the risen Jesus, his disciples gathered together once again in Jerusalem. It was a week or two before the Day of Pentecost. Jesus appeared to them on this occasion and reminded them, "I will send forth the promise of my Father upon you. You are to remain in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." Jesus then led his disciples over the crest of the Mt. of Olives to Bethany. His disciples asked him "Is it now that you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus responded, "It is not for you to know the times or ages that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But, as for you, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses, not only in Jerusalem, but also in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth." After he said these things, he was raised up into the air and a cloud received him out of their sight. As they gazed up into the sky, two men in white clothing appeared, standing beside them. "Why are you staring up into the sky? This Jesus whom you have just watched taken up into the sky, he will return in just the same way as you have seen him go into the sky.

The disciples then returned to Jerusalem and stayed in the upper room until the Day of Pentecost.

First			
Day of the week			
Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset			
1a	1b	1c	1d
Begins:	Begins:	Begins:	Begins:
6 pm Sat	midnight Sun	6 am Sun	noon Sun
Ends:	Ends:	Ends:	Ends:
midnight Sun	6 am Sun	noon Sun	6 pm Sun

Fifth			
Day of the week			
Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset			
5a	5b	5c	5d
Begins:	Begins:	Begins:	Begins:
6 pm Wed	12 am Thurs	6 am Thurs	12 pm Thurs
Ends:	Ends:	Ends:	Ends:
12 am Thurs	6 am Thurs	12 pm Thurs	6 pm Thurs

Second			
Day of the week			
Sunday sunset to Monday sunset			
2a	2b	2c	2d
Begins:	Begins:	Begins:	Begins:
6 pm Sun	midnight Mon	6 am Mon	noon Mon
Ends:	Ends:	Ends:	Ends:
midnight Mon	6 am Mon	noon Mon	6 pm Mon

Sixth			
Day of the week			
Thursday sunset to Friday sunset			
6a	6b	6c	6d
Begins:	Begins:	Begins:	Begins:
6 pm Thurs	12 am Fri	6 am Fri	12 pm Fri
Ends:	Ends:	Ends:	Ends:
12 am Fri	6 am Fri	12 pm Fri	6 pm Fri

Third			
Day of the week			
Monday sunset to Tuesday sunset			
3a	3b	3c	3d
Begins:	Begins:	Begins:	Begins:
6 pm Mon	midnight Tues	6 am Tues	noon Tues
Ends:	Ends:	Ends:	Ends:
midnight Tues	6 am Tues	noon Tues	6 pm Tues

Seventh	G		
Day of the week			
Friday sunset to Saturday sunset			
7a	7b	7c	7d
Begins:	Begins:	Begins:	Begins:
6 pm Fri	12 am Sat	6 am Sat	12 pm Sat
Ends:	Ends:	Ends:	Ends:
12 am Sat	6 am Sat	12 pm Sat	6 pm Sat

Fourth			
Day of the week			
Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset			
4a	4b	4c	4d
Begins:	Begins:	Begins:	Begins:
6 pm Tues	12 am Wed	6 am Wed	12 pm Wed
Ends:	Ends:	Ends:	Ends:
12 am Wed	6 am Wed	12 pm Wed	6 pm Wed

The
Seven
Days
of the
Week
in the
Jewish
Calendar

