

“An enlightening and edifying look at the most important week in history. Both those who want to know more about the history and those who long to behold the wonder will find much to love about this great work. One gets the sense that we should proceed through these pages on our knees.”

J. D. Greear, Pastor, The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina; author, *Everyday Revolutionary*

“You may be wondering what can be done to make Christ’s last week come alive in ways it hasn’t before. It would help to understand the historical background and cultural script a little better, but you don’t want a big book. It would help, too, if your authors were trustworthy, knowledgeable evangelical scholars who could write clearly for lay-people. Look no further—this is the book for you!”

Craig L. Blomberg, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Denver Seminary

“Whether you’re a Christian seeking to defend your faith, an inquirer wanting to know what really happened with Jesus, or a disciple who wants to know the Lord more fully, *The Final Days of Jesus* will instruct and encourage you. It lays out the truth with coherence and conviction. I will point people to this book because it so clearly and faithfully explains what happened in the final days of Jesus. Here is the truth, based on the Gospel accounts. Here is the center of the Christian story, filled with insight and inspiration.”

Mark D. Roberts, Senior Strategist, Max De Pree Center for Leadership, Fuller Theological Seminary; author, *Can We Trust the Gospels?*

“This is an immensely helpful guide to the last week of Jesus’s life—historically, theologically, and devotionally. Historically, it provides a likely chronology of Passion Week, chock full of historical, cultural, and geographical insights. Theologically, the authors provide the text of the four Gospels with helpful commentary, noting the theological contributions of each evangelist. Devotionally, the reader has the privilege of walking with Jesus through the most important week of human history—the climax of God’s redemptive plan. A feast of insights for both mind and heart.”

Mark L. Strauss, Professor of New Testament Emeritus, Bethel Seminary, San Diego

“Jesus’s last week shook but also saved the world. From Palm Sunday to Easter morning, each day and encounter were critical. This book leads the reader step-by-step along Jesus’s route from triumphal entry to the cross and finally to glory. Numerous maps and diagrams shed fresh light on each Gospel’s claims. We are reminded not only of what Christ did but also where his way points us now. An excellent beginning-to-intermediate guide!”

Robert W. Yarbrough, Professor of New Testament, Covenant Theological Seminary

“Holy Week is arguably the most sacred time of year for Christians. Andreas Köstenberger and Justin Taylor provide a simple yet eloquent survey of the final week of Jesus’s life. They take readers on a pilgrimage through the Gospels and invite us to follow Jesus in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, on to the dark and tragic moments of Golgotha, and through to the glorious and unspeakable joy at the feet of the risen Jesus. In short, this is a wonderful resource for individuals, families, and fellowships to learn more about the Easter story, the greatest story ever told.”

Michael F. Bird, Deputy Principal, Ridley College

“A clearly presented overview of the most important week in world history. Brief, helpful comments illuminate the biblical story and bring home its enduring and life-changing message.”

Douglas J. Moo, Professor of New Testament Emeritus, Wheaton College

“*The Final Days of Jesus* helps believers take note of the historical events leading up to Jesus’s death on the cross. Readers are challenged to see the provocation that Jesus’s message and life represented, leading to his arrest and execution. The book demonstrates that historical facts and Christian worship can and should go hand in hand.”

Eckhard J. Schnabel, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

“The center point of history is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Thus *The Final Days of Jesus* is an incredibly important work, for it enables us to see the full impact of the social and religious tension that lay behind Jesus’s death as well as the theological implications for us. This book is both well researched and well written and is must-reading for students of the Word and indeed for all who wish to understand more fully the God-led events that resulted in the cross.”

Grant Osborne, late Professor Emeritus of New Testament,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“Ninety-eight percent of the students entering a particular Christian college last year claimed to be Christians. Yet twenty-five percent did not know that Christianity affirms that Jesus literally rose from the dead! What better way to rediscover this truth than to walk alongside the Savior during his final days and moments? Köstenberger and Taylor guide us on our pilgrimage, and they are outstanding guides. More than anything else, they remind us that Jesus’s final days are not really the end.”

Charles L. Quarles, Research Professor of New Testament and
Biblical Theology, Charles Page Chair of Biblical Theology,
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

OTHER CROSSWAY BOOKS BY ANDREAS J. KÖSTENBERGER

Marriage and the Family: Biblical Essentials (with David W. Jones)

Excellence: The Character of God and the Pursuit of Scholarly Virtue

*The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with
Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*
(co-authored with Michael J. Kruger)

God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation
(with David W. Jones)

THE FINAL DAYS OF JESUS

THE MOST IMPORTANT WEEK OF THE
MOST IMPORTANT PERSON WHO EVER LIVED

ANDREAS J. KÖSTENBERGER
& JUSTIN TAYLOR
WITH ALEXANDER STEWART

 **CROSSWAY**[®]
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

The Final Days of Jesus: The Most Important Week of the Most Important Person Who Ever Lived

© 2014 by Andreas J. Köstenberger and Justin Taylor

Published by Crossway
1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided for by USA copyright law. Crossway® is a registered trademark in the United States of America.

Maps and illustrations are adapted from the ESV® Study Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2008 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover design: David Fassett

Cover images: Getty Images and illustrations by Adam Green

First printing 2014

Reprinted with a new cover 2026

Printed in the United States of America

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The ESV text may not be quoted in any publication made available to the public by a Creative Commons license. The ESV may not be translated in whole or in part into any other language.

All emphases in Scripture quotations have been added by the authors.

Trade paperback ISBN: 979-8-8749-1038-9

ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-3513-0

PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-3511-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Köstenberger, Andreas J., 1957–

The final days of Jesus : the most important week of
the most important person who ever lived / Andreas J.
Köstenberger and Justin Taylor, with Alexander Stewart.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4335-3510-9 (tp)

1. Jesus Christ—Passion—Devotional literature. I. Title.

BT431.3.K67 2014

232.96—dc23

2013027234

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

VP 36 35 34 33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26
13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To the crucified and risen Savior, who is our salvation

“I glorified you on earth,
having accomplished the work
that you gave me to do.”

(John 17:4)

“It is finished.”
(John 19:30)

Hallelujah!

CONTENTS

List of Charts, Diagrams, and Maps	11
Introduction: How to Use This Book	13
Early in the Week: The King Comes for His Kingdom (Sunday–Tuesday)	27
Sunday (March 29, AD 33)	31
Jesus Enters Jerusalem	
Jesus Predicts His Death	
Jesus Visits the Temple	
Monday (March 30, AD 33)	35
Jesus Curses a Fig Tree	
Jesus Cleanses the Temple	
Tuesday (March 31, AD 33)	39
Jesus Teaches His Followers a Lesson about the Fig Tree	
Jesus Teaches and Engages in Controversies in the Temple	
Jesus Predicts the Future	
Wednesday (April 1, AD 33)	47
The Plot against Jesus	
Thursday (April 2, AD 33)	51
Preparations for the Passover	
The Final Passover: The Synoptics	
The Last Supper and Jesus’s Cleansing of His Community	
The Farewell Discourse Begins	
The Farewell Discourse Continues	
Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denials	
Jesus Issues Final Practical Commands	
The Garden of Gethsemane	

Friday (April 3, AD 33)	95
The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus	
The Jewish Trial of Jesus (Phase 1): Informal	
The Jewish Trial of Jesus (Phase 2): More Formal	
Peter Denies Jesus	
The Jewish Trial of Jesus (Phase 3): The Final Verdict	
Judas Hangs Himself	
The Roman Trial of Jesus (Phase 1): Pilate	
The Roman Trial of Jesus (Phase 2): Herod Antipas	
The Roman Trial of Jesus (Phase 3): The Final Verdict	
The Road to Golgotha	
The Crucifixion	
The Death of Jesus	
The Burial of Jesus	
Saturday (April 4, AD 33)	169
The Jewish Leaders Post Guards	
Sunday (April 5, AD 33)	173
Women Discover the Empty Tomb	
The Women Tell the Disciples	
Peter and John Rush to the Tomb	
Mary Returns to the Tomb and Encounters Jesus	
Encounter on Emmaus Road	
Jesus Appears to the Ten without Thomas	
Epilogue: Later Appearances of Jesus and the Ascension	195
Jesus Appears to the Eleven, Including Thomas	
Jesus Appears to Some at the Sea of Galilee	
The Great Commission	
The Ascension	
Who Do You Say That He Is?	203
Acknowledgments	205
Suggestions for Further Reading	207
Glossary and Reference Guide	211

LIST OF CHARTS, DIAGRAMS, AND MAPS

Jesus's Crucifixion Epitaph: Differences in Wording	20
Scripture Guide to the Events of Holy Week	23
The Parable of the Tenants	40
Jesus's Final Days	53
Seating Arrangements at the Last Supper	59
The High Priestly Prayer	82
From the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane	88
From the Garden of Gethsemane to the Palace of the High Priest	102
From the Sanhedrin to Pontius Pilate	120
From Pontius Pilate to Herod Antipas	129
From Herod Antipas to Pontius Pilate	131
Jewish Reckoning of Time	142
From Pontius Pilate to Golgotha	145
Jesus's Crucifixion Epitaph in Greek, Latin, and Aramaic	155
The Last Seven Sayings of Jesus	156
Insert	
The Last Supper	
Jesus's Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion	
Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus	
The Temple Mount in the Time of Jesus	
Golgotha and the Temple Mount	
The Tomb of Jesus	

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The four Gospels contain eyewitness accounts (and first-hand reports) of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus was born of a young virgin in the town of Bethlehem, perhaps in October of 6 or 5 BC.¹ After his mother, Mary, and his adoptive father, Joseph, fled to Egypt on account of the murderous designs of Herod the Great, the family relocated to the town of Nazareth in lower Galilee, where Joseph served as a carpenter. Apart from a brief account of Jesus's interaction with the rulers of Jerusalem when he was twelve years old (probably in AD 7 or 8), we hear no further details about the life of Jesus until the beginning of his public ministry, which likely began in late AD 29 and continued until his death on Friday, April 3, AD 33.²

Jesus's relatively brief public ministry began with his baptism and wilderness temptations, continued with his authoritative teaching and miracle-working power, and culminated in his atoning death at the hands of the Romans and Jews, followed by his resurrection and ascension.

This book covers Jesus's final days. In these pages you will read the eyewitness accounts of what the most important person who ever lived said and did during the most important week of his life. Sunday through Sunday—from what we now call “Palm Sunday” to “Easter Sunday”—we will put the accounts together in roughly

¹Scholars usually suggest a date of 7–5 BC for Jesus's birth.

²Though note that many (if not most) date Jesus's death to AD 30. For more on this, see chapter 1, note 1.

chronological order, letting you read all four records of these events as we seek to explain to the best of our ability what is happening.

Before we proceed, it may be helpful to review some of the basics in order to set the stage and to remember the context of the four Gospels.

Who Wrote the Gospels?

Though the information has been doubted, there is good reason to believe that the Gospels were written by four men who were in the best possible position to recount what Jesus said and did.

Matthew and John, the authors of the first and fourth biblical Gospels, respectively, were members of the Twelve; John was even part of Jesus's inner circle (together with Peter and James).

Mark, the church fathers tell us, wrote his Gospel in close association with the apostle Peter, also one of the Twelve and a member of Jesus's inner circle as well as the preeminent spokesman of the Twelve.

Luke, finally, while not himself an eyewitness, sought to conduct a careful investigation of these events and acknowledges his dependence on "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke 1:2). (The word he uses for "eyewitnesses" is *autoptēs*, a composite of two Greek words meaning "to see for oneself.")

As John writes in his first epistle,

That which was from the beginning,
 which we have heard,
 which we have seen with our eyes,
 which we looked upon
 and have touched with our hands,
 concerning the word of life . . .
 that which we have seen and heard
 we proclaim also to you,
 so that you too may have fellowship with us. . . .

And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:1–4)

The result is that those of us today—reading the accounts two thousand years later—share an experience expressed by Peter:

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Pet. 1:8–9)

Why Were the Gospels Written?

As eyewitness accounts of the events surrounding Jesus’s first coming, the four canonical Gospels demand our utmost attention. Why were they written? John says it most clearly:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30–31)

Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God—he is the promised, long-awaited Servant of the Lord who came to save us from our sin so that by believing we may have “life in his name.”

Underneath this united, overarching purpose, we can recognize that the four Gospel authors wrote four complementary accounts designed for four distinct audiences. They used theological and literary selection in order to highlight certain aspects of Jesus’s ministry, each painting a true and faithful portrait of the one Messiah.³

The tax-collector-turned-disciple *Matthew* (Levi), writing to a Jewish audience in the 50s or 60s, emphasizes Jesus as the Jewish Messiah predicted in the Old Testament, the son of David who comes to establish the kingdom of heaven.⁴

Peter’s “interpreter” John *Mark*, writing to Gentiles in Rome in the mid- to late 50s, shows Jesus as the authoritative, suffering son of God who gives his life as a ransom for many.

³The following dates are approximations, and other scholars may date Matthew, Mark, and Luke later than is proposed here. Very few would date John earlier.

⁴The date for Matthew depends in part on whether one takes the position that Matthew wrote his Gospel first (Matthean priority) or that Mark was the first Gospel to be written (Markan priority).

Luke, a Gentile physician and travel companion to Paul, was writing a two-volume work around 58–60 to give an account of the truth of the faith to a man named Theophilus (who may also have paid for the publication of *Luke–Acts*), showing that Jesus is the savior of the world who seeks and saves the lost in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises to Israel.⁵

John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, was probably an old man when he composed his account in the mid- or late 80s or early 90s, written to the church in Ephesus to demonstrate that Jesus is the messiah who demands belief and the lamb of God who dies for the sins of the world and gives those who believe eternal life.

One of the more interesting differences between the Gospels is the strategy used to begin their biographies of Jesus's life and work. The Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) begin *in history*, first recounting either the announcement of the birth of Jesus or the announcement of his prophetic forerunner John the Baptist. John, on the other hand, begins *before* history, *in heaven*, emphasizing the eternal relationship between God the Father and God the Son before the Son took on human nature. This is one of the reasons that the Synoptics are marked by greater similarity and overlap, whereas John often highlights other aspects of Jesus's ministry as part of his overall strategy.

But the question still remains: Would it not have been easier simply to provide one authoritative account of Jesus's life rather than four versions that at times don't harmonize very easily?

The answer is, first of all, that the early church did not consider our four Gospels as four *separate* Gospels but as *one* Gospel *according to* four different witnesses—the Gospel (singular) according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The early church had it right: there is only *one* gospel message (not four!), but for reasons of his

⁵The New Testament writers refer to the Old Testament in a variety of ways. Most widely known is the pattern of fulfillment-prediction, which highlights the fulfillment of messianic prophecy in Christ (e.g., Matt. 1:22–23 citing Isa. 7:14). But there are other ways the New Testament refers to the Old Testament as well, most notably typology. Typology involves an escalating salvation-historical pattern culminating in Christ (e.g., the serpent in the wilderness: John 3:14 citing Num. 21:9). In addition, the New Testament authors refer to the Old Testament by way of analogy, illustration, and commentary (*midrash* or *peshet*).

own God chose to provide us with four (rather than just one) eyewitness accounts of this one gospel.

Second, remember what we said earlier about the nature of the Gospels as eyewitness testimony. Like witnesses in the courtroom each recounting what they saw, using their own words and recalling events and statements from their unique perspective, the Gospel writers each tell us how *they* witnessed the unfolding story of Jesus (or in Mark's and Luke's case, how their firsthand sources did). This should in fact *enhance* our appreciation for the four biblical Gospels, not *diminish* it! Demonstrably, the four evangelists did not sanitize their accounts or somehow streamline them so as to make them artificially cohere; they were unafraid to tell the story of Jesus each in his own way, without fear of contradiction—because they were all witnessing to the *one* story of Jesus, the *one* gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember also that when the Gospels were written and published, there were still plenty of eyewitnesses around who could easily have disputed the veracity of the Gospel accounts—but we are not aware of any such challenges. For this reason we have every confidence that the one Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is reliable.

Did It Really Happen?

Our primary response to the Gospels is not to criticize or to find fault but to believe. As we celebrate Easter, we can do so with a grateful heart and with the assurance that the Easter story is true—historically *and* theologically. Even though the primary design of the Gospels is for us to believe in this Messiah and to become his disciples, this does not mean it is illegitimate to explore the Gospel accounts intelligently. As Augustine and others after him have rightly asserted, faith of necessity seeks greater understanding. Our faith and our intellect should never be separated, as if (as some detractors allege) we were called to throw away our minds at conversion and blindly believe contrary to the evidence.

Critical scholars, with limited success, have sought to establish criteria for assessing the historicity of various teachings and events

in the Gospels. One such criterion is the *criterion of multiple attestation*, according to which Gospel material is likely authentic if it is found in two or more Gospels or other ancient sources that are not dependent on each other. While it is widely held that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are in some way interrelated, John's account may classify as an independent witness to many of the same events as those recorded in the so-called Synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, and Luke). This would underscore the likely historicity of these events using the criterion of multiple attestation.

Another criterion is *the criterion of dissimilarity*, according to which Gospel material is likely authentic if Jesus's teachings or actions differed from first-century Judaism or the practice of the early church. The early church, so the argument goes, would hardly have fabricated material that embarrassed the first Christians or weakened their stance in interaction with Christianity's detractors. Instead, embarrassing facts would likely have been omitted from the Gospel accounts. The fact, however, is that the Gospels include many such data that did not present Christianity in a favorable light—the apostles' rivalry and jockeying for position in Jesus's kingdom, their desertion of Jesus at his arrest, Peter's denials, and particularly the crucifixion itself, all at first glance seem to constitute embarrassing information that the church would likely have suppressed—unless these data are historical and the evangelists were honest enough to preserve them *despite* the fact that they were less than complimentary and do not present their own actions or people's response to Jesus in a positive light.

However, while these and other criteria are of some value in establishing positively the historicity of certain events recounted in the Gospels, they fall short in many ways, especially when critical scholars are trying to use these criteria negatively in order to disprove the authenticity of these accounts.

Two Ways to Read the Gospels

This, of course, does not remove the need for careful harmonization, that is, reading the four Gospels in tandem and trying to

explain any apparent differences in detail of their presentation of individual statements or events. There are two—complementary and equally legitimate—ways of reading the Gospels.

The first is to read the Gospels *vertically*, that is, to read each account from beginning to end as a self-contained story in its own right. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each told their *own* story, and we must respect the literary and theological integrity of their work. This has been increasingly realized in recent years and underscores the importance of using (initially) Matthew to explain Matthew, Mark to explain Mark, and so forth.

The other way to read the Gospels is *horizontally*, that is, how each relates to the others, as complementary accounts and witnesses to the *same* historical reality and set of statements and events. Refusing to supplement our vertical reading of the individual Gospels with a horizontal reading is tantamount to the ostrich policy of refusing to acknowledge that while the Gospels *tell the same story*, they don't do so *in exactly the same way*.

Are There Contradictions?

As you work your way through this book, you will find many instances where we acknowledge differences among the Gospel accounts of individual details and make an honest attempt to suggest plausible ways in which those accounts may in fact cohere. As John writes at the conclusion of his Gospel, “Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25). This speaks to the inevitable *selectivity* at work in the Gospels. For this reason we must not assume that just because an evangelist does not *mention* a given detail, he was necessarily unaware of it or would have disputed its accuracy. Furthermore, we must be careful not to read these accounts anachronistically, imposing artificial limitations or requiring unreasonable precision upon eyewitness testimony and the genre of ancient theological biography. A simple example can be illustrated in what was written on the epitaph of the cross

above Jesus's crucified head. Each Gospel writer gives us a slightly different version:

Jesus's Crucifixion Epitaph: Differences in Wording

Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews		John 19:19
This is Jesus,	the King of the Jews	Matt. 27:37
	the King of the Jews	Mark 15:26
This is	the King of the Jews	Luke 23:38

A charitable rather than critical reading clearly demonstrates that the evangelists are each accurately referring to the same thing rather than contradicting one another. This is consistent with the way that true (rather than artificial or deceptive) eyewitness testimony takes place: different observers remember and choose to highlight different aspects of the one event.

So we ought to read the Gospels sympathetically, giving them the benefit of the doubt, rather than reading between the lines critically, looking for problems. The burden of proof lies on those who would convict the Gospels of incoherence, not on the Gospels to prove their integrity!

Using This Book

How, then, do we recommend that you use this book? Essentially, we provide you with an account of Jesus's final week from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday, with brief presentations of preceding and subsequent events in a prologue and epilogue.

Beginning with Wednesday of the final week, we have included the complete text of Scripture for this time period, with the intention that you will first read and meditate upon God's authoritative Word and only then read our attempts to comment on what you have read.

We envision that churches, families, small groups, and individuals will benefit from reading through the biblical material and accompanying commentary in sequence on each day of Holy Week,

though certainly this subject is worthy of meditation throughout the year. Naturally, some days contain less material than others; Good Friday is particularly lengthy, so it would be good for you to plan on setting aside additional time to work through the material. The study could culminate in a special sermon, lesson, or study on Easter Sunday, including reflection on the significance of Easter and Jesus's resurrection.

While the primary purpose of this book is not academic—instead, our desire is to provide an aid to informed worship—and we have thus refrained from providing extensive references to the scholarly literature, the discussion is informed by responsible evangelical scholarship. There is a rich tapestry of historical detail, literary artistry, and theological insight to be gleaned from the Gospel accounts of Jesus's final week, and we have done our best to include all the relevant material and to do so in a way that is informative, intelligible, and interesting to read.

For those who are interested in doing further study of the Gospel presentation of Jesus's final week, we have provided a list of suggested resources. We have also included a glossary that provides brief sketches of the most important characters in the Gospel story as well as geographical and topographical information and other important data. Before you delve into your study, it will also be helpful to familiarize yourself with the sequence of events as presented in the immediately following Scripture Guide to the Events of Holy Week.

It is our prayer that God will see fit to use this volume to bring glory to himself and to the Lord Jesus Christ. “For I [Paul] delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve” (1 Cor. 15:3–5). *Soli Deo gloria*—to God alone be the glory!

SCRIPTURE GUIDE TO THE EVENTS OF HOLY WEEK

Sunday

Jesus enters Jerusalem	Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19
Jesus predicts his death	John 12:20-36
Jesus visits the temple	Matt. 21:14-17; Mark 11:11

Monday

Jesus curses a fig tree	Matt. 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14
Jesus cleanses the temple	Matt. 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48

Tuesday

The lesson from the fig tree	Matt. 21:20-22; Mark 11:20-26
Jesus teaches and engages in controversies in the temple	Matt. 21:23-23:39; Mark 11:27-12:44; Luke 20:1-21:4
Jesus predicts the future	Matt. 24-25; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36

Wednesday¹

Jesus continues his daily teaching in the temple complex	Luke 21:37-38
--	---------------

¹ We don't really know for sure that either of these events occurred on Wednesday. This is just one possible option.

The Sanhedrin plots to kill Jesus	Matt. 26:3-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2
-----------------------------------	--

Thursday

Jesus instructs his disciples Peter and John to secure a large upper room in a house in Jerusalem and to prepare for the Passover meal	Matt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13
In the evening Jesus eats the Passover meal with the Twelve, tells them of the coming betrayal, and institutes the Lord's Supper	Matt. 26:20-29; Mark 14:17-23; Luke 22:14-30
During supper Jesus washes the disciples' feet, interacts with them, and delivers the Upper Room Discourse (Farewell Discourse)	John 13:1-17:26
Jesus and the disciples sing a hymn together, then depart to the Mount of Olives	Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39
Jesus predicts Peter's denials	Matt. 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34
Jesus issues final practical commands about supplies and provisions	Luke 22:35-38
Jesus and the disciples go to Gethsemane, where he struggles in prayer and they struggle to stay awake late into the night	Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46

Friday

Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested by the authorities (perhaps after midnight, early Friday morning)	Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12
---	--

Jesus has an informal hearing before Annas (former high priest and Caiaphas's father-in-law)	Matt. 26:57, 59-68; Mark 14:53, 55-65; Luke 22:63-71
As predicted, Peter denies Jesus and the rooster crows	Matt. 26:58, 69-75; Mark 14:54, 66-72; Luke 22:54b-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27
After sunrise on Friday the final consultation of the full Sanhedrin condemns Jesus to death and sends him to Pontius Pilate	Matt. 27:1-2; Mark 15:1
Judas changes his mind, returns the silver, and hangs himself	Matt. 27:3-10
Pilate questions Jesus and sends him to Herod Antipas	Matt. 27:11-14; Mark 15:2-5; Luke 23:1-7; John 18:28-38
Herod questions Jesus and sends him back to Pilate	Luke 23:8-12
Jesus appears before Pilate a second time and is condemned to die	Matt. 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:38b-19:16
Jesus is mocked and marched to Golgotha	Matt. 27:27-34; Mark 15:16-23; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:17
Jesus is crucified between two thieves	Matt. 27:35-44; Mark 15:24-32; Luke 23:33-43; John 19:18-27
Jesus breathes his last	Matt. 27:45-56; Mark 15:33-41; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:28-37
Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus in a new tomb	Matt. 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42

Saturday

The chief priests and Pharisees place guards at the tomb with Pilate's permission	Matt. 27:62-66
---	----------------

Sunday

Some women discover the empty tomb and are instructed by angels	Matt. 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-7; John 20:1
The women, fearful and joyful, leave the garden and tell the disciples	Matt. 28:8-10; Luke 24:8-11; John 20:2
Peter and John rush to the tomb based upon Mary Magdalene's report and discover it empty	Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10
Mary returns to the tomb and encounters Jesus	John 20:11-18
Jesus appears to Cleopas and a friend on the road to Emmaus	Luke 24:13-35
That evening Jesus appears to the Eleven (minus Thomas) in a house in Jerusalem	Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-23

Later Appearances of Jesus and the Ascension

Jesus appears to the Eleven (including Thomas)	John 20:24-31
Jesus appears to some at the Sea of Galilee	John 21
The Great Commission	Matt. 28:16-20 (see also Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8)
The ascension	Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11

EARLY IN THE WEEK

THE KING COMES FOR HIS KINGDOM

SUNDAY–TUESDAY

The year was AD 33.¹ The excitement in the cool spring air of Jerusalem was palpable. Thousands of Jewish pilgrims had gathered from around the world for the upcoming Passover feast, and word had spread that Jesus—a thirty-something itinerant rabbi, prophet, and healer from Galilee—had raised Lazarus from the dead, had withdrawn from Bethany—a village just a couple miles east of Jerusalem—to a town called Ephraim in the wilderness (John 11:54), and was staying at Bethany during the weekend prior to Passover (John 11:55–12:1, 9–11).² Many had gone to Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus, with the result that they believed in Jesus and returned to the capital city with reports of his miracle-working power to raise the dead (John 12:9–11, 17–18). The Passover crowds in Jerusalem were like a powder keg ready for a spark—filled to the brim with both messianic fervor and hatred of Roman rule.

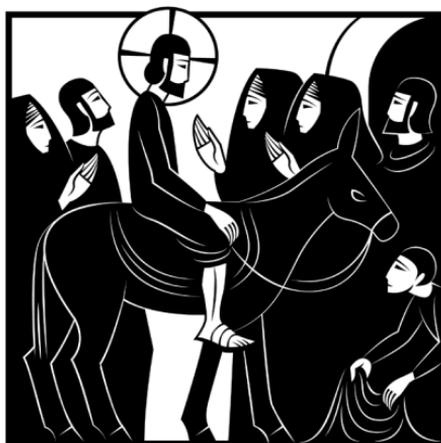
Winds of revolution whipped through the air of Palestine throughout the first century, and Jesus, with his teaching author-

¹ Most scholars believe that Jesus was crucified in AD 30. We are persuaded that the evidence strongly points to a date of AD 33. For an introductory discussion of the issues, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Date of Jesus’ Crucifixion,” *ESV Study Bible*, ed. Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 1809–10. See also Colin J. Humphreys and W. G. Waddington, “The Jewish Calendar, A Lunar Eclipse and the Date of Christ’s Crucifixion,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 43.2 (1992): 331–51.

² Many Jews came to Jerusalem a week early to ceremonially cleanse themselves and prepare for the Passover.

ity and ability to capture the imagination of the masses, not least on account of his ability to heal and raise the dead, looked very much the part of the long-awaited Messiah. In order to gain and maintain power, the Romans could kill—which they did quite effectively—but how could they defeat a leader who could raise the dead at will?

After observing the Sabbath (Friday evening through Saturday evening) at Bethany, Jesus arose Sunday morning to enter the city of Jerusalem. It was March 29, AD 33—the first day of the last week of his earthly life.



SUNDAY

MARCH 29, AD 33

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

(Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19)

The Passover crowds and inhabitants of Jerusalem were filled with messianic expectation, and Jesus does not disappoint. On Sunday morning, Jesus and his disciples are on the Mount of Olives as they approach Jerusalem. He sends two of his followers to the nearby village (Bethphage or Bethany), instructing them to bring a donkey and colt on which he will sit for his entrance into Jerusalem. By this intentional symbolic action, Jesus will clearly communicate his kingship to the expectant crowds of Passover pilgrims by fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, that Israel's future king would come riding on the foal of a donkey, and by copying Solomon's entrance into Jerusalem when he was declared king.¹

As Jesus makes his westward descent down the Mount of Olives and toward the Holy City, the crowds rightly interpret his actions with expectant joy and respond in kind by spreading robes and leafy palm branches in his pathway to create a royal red carpet (see 2 Kings 9:13) and by acclaiming him their Davidic king:

¹ 1 Kings 1:32-40. Matthew makes mention of two animals, a colt (the animal that would have carried Jesus) and a donkey (presumably the colt's mother; Matt. 21:7). Mark and Luke both mention only the colt and note that no one had ever ridden it before (Mark 11:2; Luke 19:30), hence perhaps the need for the colt's mother to steady it as it carried its first rider.

Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!

(Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:10; see also Isa. 9:7)

The crowds are openly acclaiming Jesus instead of Caesar as king!

The whole city is shaken by the events, and the crowd keeps spreading the word to any in Jerusalem who have not yet heard who Jesus is (Matt. 21:10–11). Some Pharisees instruct Jesus to rebuke the crowds for their dangerous messianic exuberance, but he refuses to correct or curtail the excitement of the crowd over his entrance into the city (Matt. 21:15–17; Luke 19:39–40). It would be hard to overestimate the political and religious volatility incited by Jesus's actions—the Pharisees were taken by surprise and had no idea how to respond (John 12:19). Up to this point in Jesus's ministry, he could still have managed to live a long, happy, peaceful life, but his actions on Sunday set in motion a series of events that could result only in either his overthrow of the Romans and the current religious establishment—or his brutal death. He has crossed the point of no return; there would be no turning back. Caesar could allow no rival kings. As Jesus approaches the city, he weeps over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–44).

Jesus Predicts His Death (John 12:20–36)

Some Greeks who were among the Passover pilgrims seek an audience with Jesus. John does not record the Greeks' question, but Jesus responds by predicting his death and describing it as the very purpose for which he has come into the world (John 12:27). A voice from heaven, thunderous in sound, affirms God's commitment to glorify his name through the coming death of Jesus (John 12:28–29). Jesus goes on to clarify the kind of fate he will meet: death by crucifixion (being "lifted up from the earth," John 12:32; see Isa. 52:13). Yet by his death, Jesus will deal Satan a crushing blow (John 12:31; see also Luke 10:18; Gen. 3:15).

The Jewish crowd, of course, does not like this kind of talk

and objects that according to the Mosaic law, the Messiah must remain forever. Jesus does not directly answer their objection but instead commands them to “walk while [they] have the light” (i.e., Jesus himself, the “light of the world,” John 8:12; 9:5) and believe in the light in order to become sons of light before it is gone and darkness comes (John 12:35–36).

Jesus Visits the Temple (Matt. 21:14-17; Mark 11:11)

Before returning with the Twelve to Bethany at the end of the day, Jesus visits the temple complex. Jesus continues to upset the religious establishment: healing the blind and lame, and receiving the praise of children.

This initial visit to the temple sets the stage for the unforgettable events that are to occur there the following day.