

“PASSION WEEK”

During March and early April of 2020, I preached a short sermon series on the events of “Passion Week”. The summaries of each of these messages have been compiled and edited to form this short booklet.

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INTRODUCTION

(with excerpts from John 12:1-11)

Over the next 6 Sundays we are going to analyze and discuss the events of “Passion Week” (also called “Holy Week”). These messages will lead us to Easter, the historic day upon which Jesus rose from the dead. It is my prayer that these sermons will help us further understand and more deeply appreciate the sacrifice that Christ made for sinners at Calvary. I hope it will give us an even greater cause to celebrate His resurrection and increased burden to proclaim salvation to the lost.

The phrase “Passion Week” refers to the intense suffering that Jesus took upon Himself during the final few days of His life. He endured mockings, beatings, scourging, and ultimately crucifixion in order to redeem and rescue humanity from their sins. He undertook all of these horrible things voluntarily and willingly laid His life down for mankind.

We will use the gospel of Mark as the primary text for this series, and supplement it with additional information found in Matthew, Luke, and John. Mark was the first gospel to be written, and it served as the template for the other 2 synoptic gospels. While Mark is the shortest of the 4 gospel books, it provides the clearest and most specific timeline of what occurred during the “Passion Week”.

Jesus likely arrived in Bethany on the Friday before Palm Sunday. He stayed at the home of His dear friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. During his previous visit to Bethany, only a few months earlier, Jesus had miraculously raised Lazarus from the dead. Now early spring, Lazarus - who was alive and well - and his sisters joyfully greeted and welcomed Jesus and His disciples into their home.

That night Martha prepared a meal for their guests. While they ate, Mary approached Jesus and anointed His feet with costly perfume, wiping them with her hair. One of the apostles, Judas Iscariot, expressed dissatisfaction with Mary’s actions, but Jesus defended her and foreshadowed His upcoming burial. Meanwhile, the report that Jesus had returned to Bethany was spreading throughout the nearby area. Many Jews came out to see Him and Lazarus, and the chief priests determined to kill them both.

It is likely that everyone stayed home on Saturday to observe the Sabbath. It was probably a quiet and uneventful day. “Passion Week” would officially begin the next morning, on Sunday. Christians refer to this day as “Palm Sunday”.

PALM SUNDAY

Mark 11:1-11 (with excerpts from Matthew 21:1-11, 17; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-26)

I. PREPARATIONS ARE MADE

Late Sunday morning, or perhaps even early afternoon, Jesus and His disciples started walking toward the nearby city of Jerusalem. Bethany was only about 2 miles east of Jerusalem, an easy walk of around 25-30 minutes. The little town of Bethphage was nestled on the road in between them. Departing from Bethany, Jesus sent 2 of His disciples ahead of Him into Bethphage with a simple task. They were to find a young colt - the male foal of a donkey - upon which no one had ever ridden, to untie it, and bring it back to Jesus.

The disciples went into the village as instructed and found the donkey's colt, just as Jesus had described (It is possible that there was both an adult donkey and a colt, but for the sake of this sermon we will focus only on the colt). Some local men, likely the owners, asked them why they were taking the animal. When the disciples explained that the Lord needed it, he granted them permission. The disciples immediately took the donkey colt back to Jesus.

All of this had been foretold hundreds of years earlier in the Old Testament (Zechariah 9:9). In his book, the prophet Zechariah wrote, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation; Humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Jesus was about to fulfill a 500 year old prophecy. Unfortunately, the disciples did not understand the significance of what was happening until much later on.

II. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The disciples brought the young colt to Jesus. They laid their coats on its back for Jesus to sit on. The Lord sat upon the donkey and rode on toward Jerusalem, with all of His disciples and an ever-growing crowd walking along with Him. Many people spread their coats out on the road before Him while others waved palm branches that they'd cut from the fields. It was a grand procession, like those of ancient kings who would ride into town on royal steeds with great pomp and circumstance.

As Jesus continued on, many people began shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" The word hosanna means "save us", "deliver us", or "rescue us". The anticipation of Jesus' return to Jerusalem was overflowing. The cheers of celebration heralding His arrival became so loud that some Pharisees in the crowd urged Jesus to silence His disciples. He answered that if they were to be quiet, the rocks themselves would cry out!

Bethphage rested on the slope of the Mount of Olives, about a mile from Jerusalem. From its elevated position, a person could see the sprawling city below. As Jesus approached

Jerusalem, He looked out over the city and wept for its citizens. Despite their kind and gracious welcome, the Lord knew that in just a few days the people would turn on Him. He foresaw and spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem which would someday come against the people.

III. A BRIEF VISIT

The excitement continued as Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. Crowds lined the streets welcoming Him with shouts of tribute and praise. Many had heard of the recent resurrection of Lazarus and wanted to see this powerful healer for themselves. Some were stirred in their spirit and asked who He was. Others identified Him as Jesus, the great prophet from Nazareth. The Pharisees saw that the whole city seemed enamored with Christ, and they worried amongst themselves about what to do.

There were some Greeks in the crowd who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread which were set to begin later that week. They were mostly likely proselytes, ethnic Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. Perhaps they had heard of Him, but most likely they'd never seen Jesus before. They asked one of the apostles, Philip, if he would introduce them to Jesus. Philip told Andrew, and the 2 apostles approached Jesus together with the Greeks' request. Upon hearing it, Jesus spoke about His upcoming death and resurrection. It is uncertain whether or not the Lord ever actually met with these Gentiles.

Jesus and those with Him eventually made their way to the temple. By this time, it was likely late in the afternoon or perhaps early evening. Jesus walked around the temple complex and looked at everything, but after a brief stay He and the apostles left. The hour was getting late, so they returned to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus' home in Bethany where they were staying and settled in for the night.

MONDAY

Mark 11:12-19 (with excerpts from Matthew 21:12-16, 18-19c; Luke 19:45-48; John 12:27-50)

I. THE BARREN FIG TREE

After a good night of rest in Bethany, Jesus and His disciples got up Monday morning and decided to return to Jerusalem. As they walked together toward the city, Jesus became hungry. He looked around and saw a fig tree covered with leaves standing by the road up ahead. Jesus approached the fig tree hoping to find a quick snack, but there was no fruit on it. In His disgust, the Lord cursed the fig tree saying, "May no one ever eat from you again!" His disciples heard what Jesus said and may have considered His words to be a bit rash.

Fig trees naturally produce their fruit at the same time or even before putting on their leaves. Though it was early spring - which is not the ideal season for figs - the fact that this tree was already covered with leaves strongly suggested that there should be fruit on it. It would be quite abnormal for a fig tree coated with leaves to be barren. Jesus expected to find fruit on this tree, and was angry when He discovered none.

The Bible symbolizes the nation of Israel as a fig tree (Hosea 9:10). As the chosen people of God, they were supposed to represent Him rightly before the nations. By doing so, they would produce spiritual fruit among themselves and in others. However, despite being adorned with the leaves of God's glorious favor, they had largely failed to bear spiritual figs. Jesus' cursing of the fig tree that morning was a picture of God's looming judgment on Israel.

II. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

Leaving the cursed fig tree behind, Jesus and the disciples continued into Jerusalem and made their way to the temple. When they entered, they saw money changers and merchants who had set up tables and were conducting business. This was likely taking place in the temple's outer court, which was known as the Court of the Gentiles. Jesus became enraged by this, and began to drive out all of those who were buying and selling. He turned over their tables and chairs, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. Jesus reminded the people that the LORD's temple was to be a "house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7), but they had made it a "robber's den" (Jeremiah 7:11).

Many Gentile proselytes and even some ethnic Jews traveled long distances to Jerusalem in order to observe the Passover. Rather than bringing their own sacrificial animals on the journey, it was much easier to buy them after arriving. Furthermore, the annual temple tax had to be paid with Jewish currency creating a need for many to exchange their Roman coins. Knowing this, greedy money changers and merchants conveniently placed themselves inside the temple court and charged exorbitant fees to provide these services. They were taking advantage of these

sojourners for their own financial gain. Jesus was infuriated by their blatant desecration of the temple and drove them out.

This event actually appears to be the second time that Jesus cleansed the temple. 3 years earlier, near the beginning of His ministry and also around the time of Passover, a similar occurrence took place (John 2:13-22). Jesus drove money changers and merchants out of the temple on that occasion as well. However, there are a few notable differences between these 2 incidents which distinguish them from one another. Sadly, it appears that these Jewish merchants and money changers had not heeded Jesus' rebuke the first time around, and were now receiving it once again.

After cleansing the temple, Jesus started teaching the crowds that were gathered there. He healed several blind and lame people. Children began to cry out that He was the long-awaited "Son of David". The chief priests and scribes got upset at these kids, but Jesus acknowledged that they were simply acting in accordance with Scripture (Psalm 8:2). Sometimes adults should listen to what children are saying! Jesus spent the remainder of the day teaching, then returned to Bethany for the night.

TUESDAY

Mark 11:20-13:37 (with excerpts from Matthew 21:19d-25:46 and Luke 20:1-21:38)

I. THE WITHERED FIG TREE

On Tuesday morning Jesus and the disciples started toward walking Jerusalem again. As they approached the spot where Jesus had cursed the fig tree a day earlier, the disciples were amazed to see that it had completely withered away. Usually this process took several weeks, yet this tree had completely shriveled from the root up in just a matter of hours. This speaks to the power of Christ and the immediacy of God's judgment. The disciples asked Jesus how this could happen so quickly, and He began teaching them about faith, expectancy, and forgiveness.

There is a slight discrepancy between the accounts of Mark and Matthew regarding the fig tree. According to Mark, the incident took place over the course of 2 mornings - Monday and Tuesday - as has been presented in this series. Matthew, however, writes that everything happened on the same day. He states that it was actually Tuesday morning when Jesus became hungry, found the barren fig tree, and pronounced the curse that caused it to wither away immediately. While I believe Mark's timeline to be correct, it really doesn't matter. Either way, the essential truth of the story remains the same. God judges the fruitless, in this case the nation of Israel.

II. TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

After arriving at the temple, while He was walking in the outer courts, Jesus was approached by the elders, teachers, and chief priests. They asked, "By what or on whose authority are you doing these things?" Jesus responded to their challenge with a question of His own, "On whose authority did John baptize people in the Jordan?" They were trapped by Jesus' question and unwilling to answer it. Therefore, Jesus didn't answer their question either.

Throughout the day, Jesus taught the people using several different parables. The Parable of the Two Sons pictured a father asking his sons to do chores, and stressed that actual obedience is better than empty words. The Parable of the Marriage Feast described a royal banquet in which the king's original guests chose not to come, so the commoners were invited instead. The Parable of the Vine-Growers pictured a master taking his vineyard away from the care of his servants because they had rejected his messengers and ultimately killed his son. Each of these stories pertained to the Jewish people, particularly the religious elites.

The Pharisees and Sadducees hoped to trap Jesus in a misstatement so they presented Him with a series of leading questions. First they asked if it was lawful to pay Caesar. Next they gave a long hypothetical story about a man, his wife, and his 7 brothers, then asked about marriage in the resurrection. Finally, they asked which was the greatest commandment. In each instance, Jesus answered wisely and eluded their snare. Then Jesus identified Himself as the Son of

David, pointing out that even King David had called Jesus Lord centuries earlier. He then told the people to beware of the scribes, stating that they'd receive greater condemnation.

At some point, Jesus sat down near the temple treasury and watched as people passed through giving money. Several rich people came by putting in large amounts. Then a widow stepped forward and gave 2 small copper coins, valuing less than a penny. Jesus called His disciples together and explained that the widow's gift was greater than all the others, because they had given out of their surplus but she gave all that she had to live on.

Jesus began speaking out directly against the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. He pointed out their prideful arrogance and taught that only the humble will be exalted. Jesus pronounced a series of devastating woes against them, publicly calling out their many sins. This enraged the scribes and Pharisees even more. Finally, Jesus lovingly lamented over Jerusalem because He already knew the things that were about to take place.

III. THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

That evening, as Jesus and the disciples were leaving Jerusalem, one of them asked about the future of the temple. Jesus replied that someday it would be completely destroyed. As they walked up the gentle slope of the Mount of Olives on the roadway to Bethany, a few of the disciples closer to Christ probed a bit further. They wanted to know exactly when the temple would be destroyed and what signs would take place at the end of the age.

Jesus sat down and began to list several such signs. He talked about spiritual deception and delusion, involving many false messiahs and false prophets. He spoke of wars, rumors of wars, and great political upheaval. He described natural disasters such as earthquakes, famines, and pestilence. He warned of extreme persecution against the church, family betrayal, violence, immorality, and lawlessness. He warned those in Judea to flee to the mountains whenever they saw the "abomination of desolation" being set up in the temple.

After giving these dire warnings, Jesus then spoke of His glorious return. He told the disciples a parable about a fig tree putting on leaves as an indication that summer was near. In like manner, though no one knows the exact time of Christ's return, they can look at the signs of the times to determine if the end is near. Jesus stressed the importance of always being alert and ready for His imminent return. By the time they reached Bethany that night, He'd told them the Parable of the 10 Virgins, the Parable of the Talents, and taught them about the future Sheep and Goats Judgment. They spent another evening with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

WEDNESDAY

Mark 14:1-11 (with excerpts from Matthew 26:1-16 and Luke 22:1-6)

Most experts believe that Jesus stayed in Bethany on Wednesday. Meanwhile in Jerusalem, the scribes and Pharisees were conspiring to kill Him. They wanted to take Him when no one was around, so as not to create a riot during the Passover festivities, but they didn't know when such an opportunity might arise.

Sometime that day, probably at lunchtime, Jesus was invited to eat at the home of Simon the leper. During the meal, a woman approached Jesus and anointed His head with costly perfume. The disciples were upset at the woman because the perfume had been wasted, but Jesus defended her and explained that it was done in preparation of His burial. This event was very similar to another anointing that had taken place just a few days before, during dinner at Mary and Martha's house (John 12:1-8).

After the meal, Judas Iscariot went away and found the chief priests. He may have gone into Jerusalem on his own. Nevertheless, he met with them secretly and agreed to betray Jesus in exchange for 30 pieces of silver. Judas would report Jesus' whereabouts to these officials and inform them of any times when He was alone or withdrawn from the crowds. This would give them a chance to arrest Him privately and without incident. After returning to the house in Bethany, the rest of the day transpired as normal.

THURSDAY

Mark 14:12-52 (with excerpts from Matthew 26:17-56, Luke 22:7-53, John 13:1-18:11)

I. PREPARING FOR PASSOVER

Sometime Thursday morning Jesus sent a pair of His disciples into Jerusalem to prepare a place for them all to celebrate the Passover meal later that night. He told them that they'd be met by a man carrying a pitcher of water who would lead them to a house with a large guest room. They were to make it ready. After receiving their instructions, these 2 disciples went to Jerusalem and everything happened just as Jesus foretold. They prepared for the Passover.

II. IN THE UPPER ROOM

That evening Jesus and the apostles came into Jerusalem and gathered in the Upper Room. The Passover meal, which had been prepared before their arrival, was served. During the meal Jesus took off His garments, girded Himself with a towel, and went around the table washing the disciples' feet. Peter initially resisted having the Lord wash his feet, but after Jesus spoke, he allowed it. It was a beautiful picture of humility and how Christians should serve one another.

After returning to His place at the table, Jesus stated that one of the apostles would betray Him. They were all surprised and disturbed, each wondering who it might be. Jesus answered that it would be "the one who dips in the bowl with Me". He then dipped a morsel of food and handed it to Judas Iscariot. At this moment, Satan entered Judas and he got up from the supper and quickly left to go find the chief priests. Despite hearing and seeing this happen, the other apostles didn't realize what Judas was doing and thought nothing of it.

Jesus then took the bread, blessed it, and broke it. He said, "This is My body which is broken for you. Take and eat. Do so in remembrance of Me." Afterward He took the cup, gave thanks, and said, "This is My blood which is poured out for many. Take and drink in remembrance of Me." In so doing, Jesus symbolized His upcoming death and established the ordinance of communion, also known as the Lord's Supper.

Over dinner, the disciples discussed among themselves who would be the greatest of them. Jesus explained that those who wish to be great must become servants. He then began to teach them several things. He talked about His oneness with the Father, the role of the Holy Spirit, the vine and the branches, the disciples' relationship with one another and with the world, and the importance of expectant prayer. He warned them of future persecution, and foretold His death and resurrection. The disciples were troubled at His words. Jesus comforted them, and promised that the Holy Spirit would come to help them after His departure.

When He had finished teaching, Jesus prayed for Himself, the apostles, and all believers in the generations to come. He then instructed the disciples to prepare themselves to stand against

the coming persecution. They sang a hymn together, and then departed for the Mount of Olives (where the Garden of Gethsemane was located). By this time, it was well after dark. Along the way, Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him 3 times that night before the rooster crowed at dawn. Peter, and the other disciples, refused to believe Him.

III. AT THE GARDEN

They came to the Garden of Gethsemane, which was located just outside of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. Jesus asked the apostles to sit at the edge of the garden, to keep watch, and to pray. He took Peter, James, and John with Him deeper into the garden. He asked them to sit and pray also. Leaving them, Jesus went alone a bit further into the garden and began to pray by Himself. He earnestly asked the Father to give Him the strength to do His will. An angel appeared and ministered to Jesus as He prayed. His agony was so great that His sweat became like drops of blood. After a while, Jesus returned to check on His disciples and found them sleeping. He woke them up and urged them to keep praying. Jesus went away and came back 3 separate times that night, and each time the disciples had fallen asleep.

After waking them the third time, Judas Iscariot approached Jesus leading a cohort of men carrying clubs and swords. He must have known where Jesus was planning to go after the dinner. Judas greeted Jesus with a kiss, then the soldiers seized Him. Peter tried to prevent the arrest. He drew his sword and struck, cutting off the ear of the chief priest's servant. Jesus intervened by telling Peter to put away his sword, then He lovingly healed the injured man's ear. All of the disciples fled, and the authorities took Jesus into custody under the dark of the night as though He was a vile criminal. It was around midnight, and a new day was beginning.

GOOD FRIDAY

Mark 14:53-15:47 (excerpts from Matthew 26:57-27:61; Luke 22:54-23:56a; John 18:12-19:42)

I. THE TRIALS

Jesus was taken first to the home of Annas, the highly respected father-in-law of the high priest, for a preliminary investigation. From there he was brought to Caiaphas, the actual high priest, who further questioned Him. The council and elders were summoned. Finally, as morning approached, Jesus was tried before the Sanhedrin. Throughout the course of the night, Jesus was repeatedly mocked and beaten viciously. False testimony was presented and accusations were trumped up. Though all of these trials were illegitimate, ultimately the Jews charged and convicted Him of blasphemy. However, they lacked the authority to execute Him.

Peter had followed Jesus and His captors to the home of the chief priest. While they were interrogating the Lord inside, Peter remained outside in the courtyard warming himself by the fire. During the night, some of those who were present there recognized Peter as one of Jesus' apostles. They accused him of knowing Jesus, but Peter denied it 3 times. After his third denial, with sunrise drawing near, a rooster crowed (perhaps twice). Suddenly remembering what Jesus had predicted the night before, Peter ran away and wept bitterly.

As the dawn broke, Judas realized that Jesus had been condemned by the Jewish Council. He felt guilty and remorseful for having betrayed Christ. He went to the chief priests to return the 30 pieces of silver that they'd given him. But it was too late to undo what he'd done, and the chief priests didn't want their money back. Devastated, Judas threw it into the temple sanctuary. From there, he went away into the fields and hanged himself.

Meanwhile the Jewish officials led Jesus to the Roman governor Pilate, hoping that He'd be sentenced to death. But after consulting with Him, Pilate couldn't find any reason to convict Jesus. The Jews were insistent, so Pilate sent Jesus to stand trial before Herod. Herod spoke briefly with Him, but not wanting to get involved, he returned Jesus back to Pilate. In an effort to appease the Jews, Pilate had Jesus scourged with a whip. They were still not satisfied. Pilate then offered to release a prisoner, but the Jews chose Barabbas over Jesus. Finally Pilate buckled under the pressure, despite having been warned by his wife not to do so. He charged Jesus with insurrection against Rome and handed Him over to be crucified.

II. THE CRUCIFIXION

The soldiers fashioned a crown of thorns and placed it on Jesus' head. They dressed Him in purple robes and ridiculed Him. Stripping Him, they then forced Jesus, along with 2 other criminals, to carry their crosses through the streets of Jerusalem. Crowds followed and women wept as they watched. Jesus had already been ruthlessly beaten and scourged. Exhausted, He

struggled under the weight of the cross and finally fell. A bystander named Simon of Cyrene was chosen to carry Jesus' cross the rest of the way to Golgotha.

When they arrived, Jesus was nailed to the cross and raised into position between 2 criminals who were also being executed. It was about 9:00 am in the morning. A sign was posted above His head which read, "King of the Jews". While Jesus hung there, the Roman soldiers below laughed and cast lots for His clothing. They offered Him bitter wine, but Jesus refused to drink it. Many people in the crowd of onlookers taunted Him and hurled insults His way.

Jesus spoke several times while He was suspended on the cross. He prayed for those who were crucifying Him, saying, "Father forgive them, for they don't realize what they're doing." He forgave the repentant thief who was hanging beside Him and promised, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." He entrusted the care of His mother Mary to the apostle John by telling them, "Behold your mother" and "Behold your son".

Around noon, an eerie darkness fell over the land. It persisted for 3 long and unsettling hours. During the haze, Jesus cried out, "My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?" The people thought that He was calling out for Elijah to come rescue Him and they anxiously waited to see if he'd appear. At some point Jesus triumphantly shouted, "It is finished!". It was a declaration that Jesus had completed His mission to conquer sin. Then He hung His head and breathed His last breath, gasping, "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit."

Immediately the ground began to violently shake. The rocks broke apart. The veil of the temple was split from top to bottom. The entrances of many tombs were opened. The centurion standing at the foot of the cross was so shaken by what was happening that he exclaimed, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

As the afternoon continued, a decision was made to break the legs of those who were being crucified so that they'd die and could be taken down before sunset. However, when the soldiers saw that Jesus had already died they decided not to break His bones. Instead they pierced His side with a spear, to insure that He was truly dead. Blood and water flowed out. This took place to fulfill Old Testament prophecies in found Psalms and Zechariah.

III. THE BURIAL

Late that afternoon or perhaps early evening, the soldiers removed the bodies of those who had been crucified from the crosses. According to Jewish law, these bodies had to be disposed of before the Sabbath began in just a few hours. A prominent man named Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate if he could have Jesus' body, and was given permission.

So Joseph and Nicodemus, both members of the Sanhedrin who were sympathetic to Christ, took Jesus' body and hastily anointed it with myrrh and aloe. They quickly wrapped it in linen clothes and placed it in a new tomb where no one had ever laid before. They rolled a stone in

front of the tomb's entrance to protect the body from scavengers and thieves. As all of this took place, several of the women were watching nearby - including Mary Magdalene. Jesus was buried around dusk, just before the sun set.

SATURDAY

No citations in Mark (with excerpts from Matthew 27:62-66 and Luke 23:56b)

The next day was Saturday, the Sabbath day. All of the disciples rested, as commanded by the Mosaic Law. The women spent their time preparing spices and perfumes. They planned to return to the tomb the next morning, after the Sabbath, to properly and more thoroughly prepare Jesus' body for burial.

Meanwhile, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and asked him to place a Roman guard at the tomb's entrance for 3 days. They were concerned that Jesus' disciples would steal His body and then claim that He had risen. Pilate agreed to their request. Roman soldiers were sent to secure the tomb. They sealed it shut and then remained stationed there to stand guard.

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

Mark 16:1-14 (with excerpts from Matthew 28:1-15; Luke 24:1-44; John 20:1-23)

I. AT THE TOMB

At some point during the night, a severe earthquake occurred. An angel descended from Heaven, rolled the stone away from the tomb's opening, and sat on it. The angel was dressed in dazzling white clothing. The guards stationed there were paralyzed in fear, helpless to do anything, and likely fled. It was at this point that Jesus miraculously rose from the dead and came out of the grave.

Early Sunday morning, just before sunrise, several women - including Mary Magdalene - came to the tomb bringing their spices. Some of them had prepared their own spices, while others had purchased them the day before. They had planned to return to the tomb after the Sabbath day to anoint and provide additional care for the body of Jesus. Along the way, they wondered if they'd be able to move the large stone to get inside the tomb. To their surprise, when they arrived it had already been rolled away from the entrance. The women were very concerned, likely thinking that something bad had happened. Mary Magdalene told them to wait there while she went to get Peter and John. Perhaps they'd know what to do. Leaving them, she quickly ran back into the city.

After standing outside for several minutes, perhaps fearful to go in themselves, an angel appeared and invited these other women to enter the tomb. When they went in, a second angel greeted them. He told them that Jesus had risen, showed them the place where His body had been lying, and instructed them to go inform the rest of the disciples. These other women slowly went out from the tomb overcome with fear and hesitant to tell anyone what they had seen or heard. Because they were afraid and anxious, they didn't immediately do what the angels told them, but instead dawdled and delayed.

Moments after they'd left, John arrived at the tomb and stood outside looking in. Seconds later, Peter showed up also - both men had been running. When Peter got there, he barrelled straight into the tomb. John then followed him inside. They both saw the linen wrappings and head cloth that had been used to shroud Jesus's body, but He was not there. Amazed, the 2 disciples left the empty tomb and returned to the place where they were staying.

By this point, Mary Magdalene had also arrived and stood outside the tomb weeping. Looking inside, she saw the 2 angels who had appeared earlier to the other women. They asked her why she was crying, and she answered, "They have taken away My Lord and I don't know where they've laid Him." Turning around, Mary saw a man that she assumed was the gardener. She asked him if he knew where Jesus' body was. The man called her by name, and she suddenly recognized that He was Jesus! Mary joyfully clung to Him, but He lovingly told her to

let go. After speaking briefly with Jesus, Mary Magdalene rushed away to find the disciples and tell them that she had seen the risen Lord.

Meanwhile, the other women had put off returning because they were scared. But Jesus appeared to them also, and they fell at His feet and worshiped Him. Now fully convinced of His resurrection, their fears were turned into joy. They too ran to tell the disciples what Jesus and the angels had said. So both Mary Magdalene and the other women came and reported their news to the disciples, but the disciples did not believe them.

The guards who had been stationed at the tomb and actually witnessed the resurrection came into Jerusalem and described to the chief priests all that had happened. A story was concocted to explain away the resurrection as a grave robbing, and the soldiers were paid to keep their mouths shut. This lie was widely circulated and believed by many, even to this day.

II. ON THE ROAD

Later that afternoon, Jesus appeared to 2 disciples as they were travelling home from the Passover festivities to Emmaus. Jesus approached them and talked with them as they walked along the road, however they did not recognize Him. When they finally arrived, the pair asked Jesus to join them for dinner and He agreed. As they ate, Jesus took some bread, blessed it, broke it, and began to give it to them. Their eyes were opened and they immediately recognized that this stranger was Jesus. In an instant, He vanished. They were completely astonished. Though the hour was already getting late, the 2 disciples hurried back to Jerusalem to find the disciples and tell what had happened. When they arrived, they found the disciples gathered in the upper room. Jesus had appeared to Peter also sometime earlier that day, and they were all talking excitedly about it.

III. IN THE ROOM

Most of the disciples were present that night. For some unknown reason, Thomas the apostle was not there. Nevertheless, as they conversed with each other, Jesus suddenly appeared in the room with them. At first they were startled, thinking perhaps that He was a spirit. To alleviate their doubts and reassure them that he was real, Jesus showed them the wounds in His hands and feet. They actually touched His resurrected body. To provide further evidence, Jesus asked for and ate a piece of fish. There was no question - Jesus had literally and physically risen from the dead. He then spoke about forgiveness and the soon coming of the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

By the time Sunday was over, Jesus had not only risen from the dead but had also made at least 5 post resurrection appearances. He had been seen by Mary Magdalene, several of the other women, the apostle Peter, 2 other disciples on the road to Emmaus, and all of the disciples (except for Thomas) together in the upper room. Over the course of the next 40 days, Jesus would make several more appearances to numerous people in different places leaving behind literally hundreds of witnesses that boldly attested to His physical resurrection.

The "Passion Week" had come to an end. The 8 days spanning from Palm Sunday to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ were filled with triumph and treachery, with anger and adulation, with pain and petition, with instruction and indignation, with suffering and sorrow, with death and life... As the week came to a close, Jesus had gloriously risen from the grave. He was alive again, just as He had promised!

My friends, the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides indisputable proof that He is the Son of God. It confirms everything that He taught and said. Because Jesus is risen, we as God's children can be absolutely certain that we will rise also. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us, and gives us the assurance of eternal life. This is the wonderful message of Easter - Jesus lives, and in Him we live also!

Passion Week (The Traditionally Accepted Sequence of Events)

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
<i>Friday/Saturday</i>	-	-	-	12:1-11
Palm Sunday	21:1-11, 17	11:1-11	19:28-44	12:12-26
Mad Monday	21:12-16, 18-19c	11:12-19	19:45-48	12:27-50
Teaching Tuesday	21:19d-25:46	11:20-13:37	20:1-21:38	-
Betrayal Wednesday	26:1-16	14:1-11	22:1-6	-
Remembrance Thursday	26:17-56	14:12-52	22:7-53	13:1-18:11
Good Friday	26:57-27:61	14:53-15:47	22:54-23:56a	18:12-19:42
Silent Saturday	27:62-66	-	23:56b	-
Resurrection Sunday	28:1-15	16:1-14	24:1-44	20:1-23

Passion Week Chart of Daily Occurrences

	Modern (Roman) Day	Jewish Day	Occurrences and Events
Sunset	Friday Night		Jesus Arrives at Bethany, Dinner at Mary & Martha's
Midnight	Saturday	6 Days Before the Passover & the Sabbath Day (Nissan 8)	
Sunrise			
Noon			
Sunset			
Midnight	Palm Sunday	5 Days Before the Passover (Nissan 9)	
Sunrise			2 Disciples Find & Bring Donkey Colt to Jesus
Noon			Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
Sunset			
Midnight	Mad Monday	4 Days Before the Passover (Nissan 10)	
Sunrise			Curses Barren Fig Tree
Noon			Cleanses Temple, Teaching, & Healing
Sunset			
Midnight	Teaching Tuesday	3 Days Before the Passover (Nissan 11)	
Sunrise			Fig Tree Is Completely Withered
Noon			Teaches in the Temple, Confronts Pharisees, Olivet Discourse
Sunset			
Midnight	Betrayal Wednesday	2 Days Before the Passover (Nissan 12)	
Sunrise			
Noon			Meal at Simon the Leper's House, Judas Meets with Chief Priests
Sunset			
Midnight	Remembrance Thursday	Day Before the Passover (Nissan 13)	
Sunrise			
Noon			2 Disciples Find & Prepare the Upper Room
Sunset			The Last Supper, Prayer & Arrest at Garden of Gethsemane
Midnight	Good Friday	Passover & Day of Preparation for the Sabbath (Nissan 14)	Jewish Trials
Sunrise			Roman Trials, Herod, The Crucifixion Begins (9am)
Noon			The Crucifixion Ends (3pm), Burial in Joseph's Tomb
Sunset			
Midnight	Silent Saturday	First Day of Unleavened Bread & the Sabbath Day (Nissan 15)	
Sunrise			Soldiers Seal and Remain Stationed at Tomb
Noon			
Sunset			Some Women Buy Spices, Others Prepare Them
Midnight	Resurrection Sunday	Feast of First Fruits & 2nd Day of Unleavened Bread (Nissan 16)	The Resurrection Occurs
Sunrise			The Empty Tomb, Appearances to Mary, Women, and Peter
Noon			Appearance on Road to Emmaus
Sunset			(Nissan 17)

A Possible Reconciliation of the Easter Morning Accounts

#1 - After sunset Saturday night, some women bought spices.

Mark 16:1 - 1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him.

#2 - Some during the night, Jesus rose from the grave.

Matthew 28:2-4 - 2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. 3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

#3 - The women, including Mary Magdalene, came to the tomb around sunrise.

Luke 24:1-2 - 1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

Matthew 28:1 - 1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

Mark 16:2-4 - 2 Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. 3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

*John 20:1 - 1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and *saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.*

#4 - Seeing it opened, Mary ran back to tell Peter and John.

John 20:2 - 2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.

#5 - Angels appeared to the other women still waiting at the tomb.

Matthew 28:5-7 - 5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. 7 Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

Luke 24:3-7 - 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; 5 and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? 6 He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, 7 saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

*Mark 16:5-7 - 5 Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. 6 And he *said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'"*

#6 - The other women left the tomb, but didn't immediately go tell the disciples.

Mark 16:8 - 8 They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Luke 24:8 - 8 And they remembered His words,

Matthew 28:8a - 8a And they left the tomb quickly with fear...

#7 - Peter and John arrived to see what was going on.

*John 20:3-10 - 3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. 4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; 5 and stooping and looking in, he *saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. 6 And so Simon Peter also *came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he *saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.*

Luke 24:12 - 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

#8 - Mary encountered the risen Jesus!

*John 20:11-17 - 11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She *said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"*

Mark 16:9 - 9 Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.

#9 - Jesus appeared to the other women also!

Matthew 28:8b-10 - 8b ...and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."

#10 - All of the women, including Mary Magdalene, reported their news to the disciples.

Luke 24:9-11 - 9 and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. 11 But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

Mark 16:10-11 - 10 She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11 When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

*John 20:18 - 18 Mary Magdalene *came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.*