

THE WEEK  
*that*  
CHANGED  
THE WORLD



*Following our Savior to the  
cross, grave, and resurrection.*

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*You may have grown up in a church that organized “Holy Week” or “Passion Week” readings and services. Although there are many different ways to approach Holy Week, we have chosen a variety of passages for you to consider. As we enter the week leading up to Resurrection Sunday, you may find this resource useful to stir up your interest, understanding, knowledge, and worship of Jesus for who He is and what He has done. We urge you to take the time to read through all the recommended passages during the week before Easter Sunday. Resist the urge to rush through these sections. Take time. Meditate on His Word. Sit. Pray. And know that He is good, in fact good enough to solve our sin condition.*

## HOLY WEEK

**T**hroughout history, the church held somber and reflective services during the week leading up to Easter. The Roman Catholic church, the Greek Orthodox church and Protestants adapted these memorial services to their own traditions. What began as simple “pilgrimages” in the third century became more

elaborate by the sixth century and were incorporated into the church calendar (sometimes called “Holy Days”). Designed to remember Jesus Christ’s arrest, mistreatment, mocking, beating, false accusations, illegal trials, crucifixion and burial, these services have been called “Holy Week” or “Passion Week.”





## PASSOVER

In Exodus 12 the Jews were commanded to keep Passover as a permanent annual memorial so they, and the generations to come, would not forget God's great and miraculous deliverance of Israel out from Egyptian slavery. The word *Passover* can refer to the lamb, the meal or the entire festival week.

In the Old Testament, the Passover memorial was technically one night (Nisan 14th-15th) followed by a week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15th-21st). Over time these two celebrations became known as one event: Passover. After Christ's life,

death, burial, and resurrection, the Passion essentially means Christ's *sufferings* (translated *passion* in Acts 1:3 in some English Bibles). The Passion took on fuller meaning referring to all of Christ's suffering including His crucifixion. His suffering and dying in the sinner's place, is the only payment for sin (redemption) and believers are freed from slavery to sin (deliverance) to make a way for us to worship Him. It is important to remember the connection to the Old Testament Passover and Jesus' final fulfillment of the Passover as the crescendo of His unique work.





## PALM SUNDAY

In most church traditions, Holy Week begins with “Palm Sunday” – the Sunday before Easter – and recalls Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. Matthew 21 records Jesus’ movement from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. The worshipers waved palm branches, readily available from

date palm trees along the way, and sang songs as He entered the city. Throughout history both simple and elaborate services (lectionaries, cantatas, chants, “Passion” music...) were written by many composers to commemorate these “high and holy days.” (Some will be familiar with J.S. Bach’s *Passion*.)

## CHURCH CALENDARS

While the schemes and calendars differ, the Roman Catholic Church (and others) designate each day of the week with a special emphasis: Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday, Holy Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. Various attempts were designed for these days with Old Testament prophecies and harmonizing the Gospel accounts to recreate events leading up to Jesus’ crucifixion. Around the third and the fourth century, the

Roman Catholic Church designated this week as a time to abstain from meat, especially the Friday before Easter. The Lenten Season, 40 weekdays, was later devised as a time of fasting, preparation for baptismal candidates, abstinence, and spiritual renewal as preparation for Holy Week. Some historians tie Lent to Christ’s 40 days in the wilderness. In recent history, many mainline churches observe Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.





## MAUNDY THURSDAY

**M**aundy is a rough rendering of a Latin translation of the word *commandment* (John 13:34). Some traditions observe foot washing during this Thursday service. *Tenebrae* is Latin for darkness or shadows and was carried out over three evening services that began on Maundy Thursday, the second on Good Friday and the third

on Holy Saturday. Historically Psalms 148-150 became the canticle (musical arrangement) for systematically extinguishing candles until the last candle is removed from the church in complete darkness. A loud noise was made – thunder – to remember the earthquake as a sign that the tomb was opened, and the candle was then brought back into the church.





## GOOD FRIDAY

Catholic traditions observe the Stations of the Cross or sometimes called the *Way of the Cross* focused on the so-called last seven words of Jesus from the cross. These 14 “stations” could be plaques, paintings, or statues placed in the naves in the church, outside, (along the so-called *Via Dolorosa* “The way of grief/suffering”) where worshipers stopped, listened to readings, knelt, stood, prayed in the longest Catholic service.

A three hour service dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Lima, Peru and consequently is widely practiced among Hispanic communities.

The day of Christ’s resurrection was not called *Easter* until the eight century. Controversy surrounded the title *Easter* due

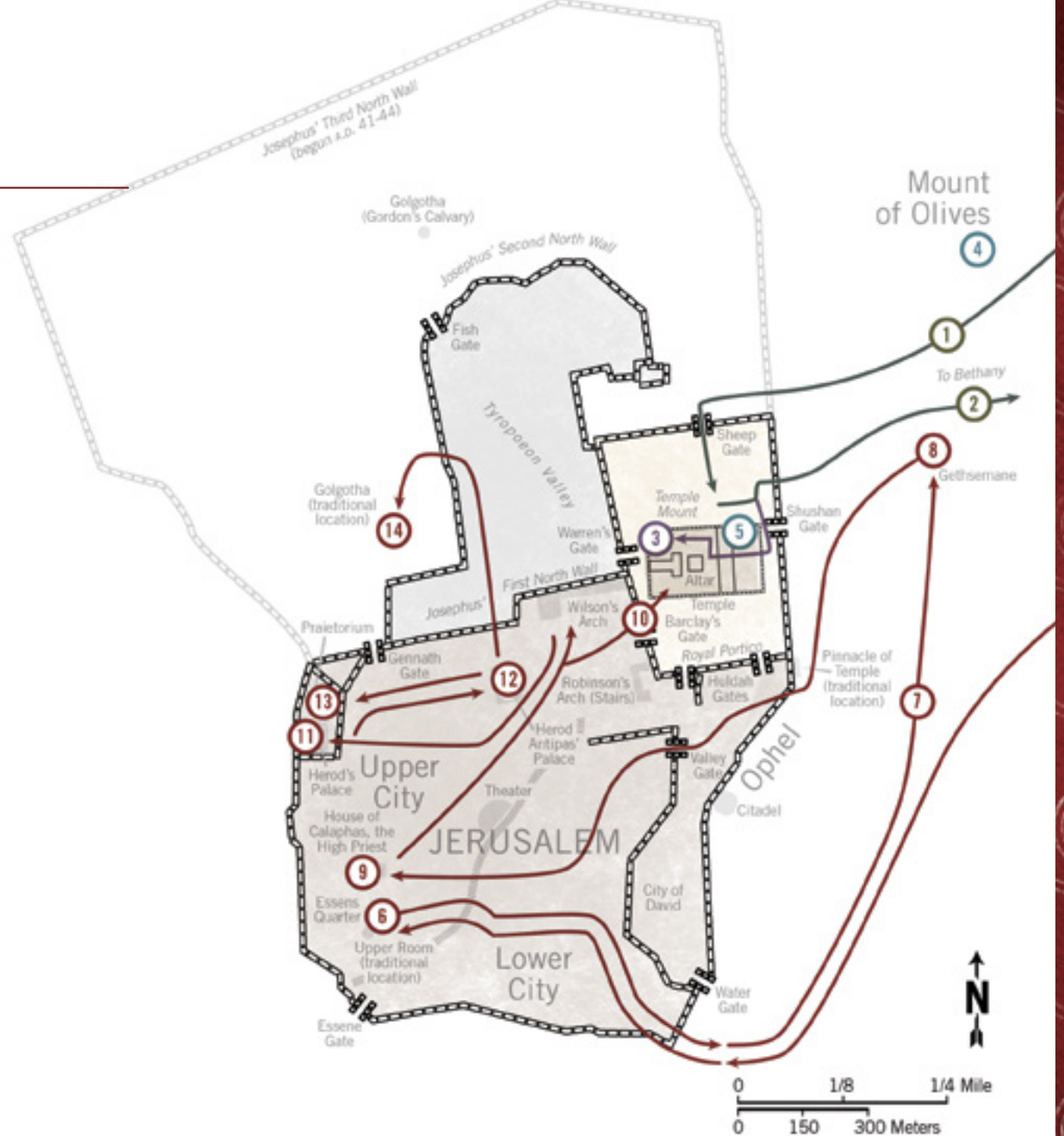
to its association with sacrifices in honor of the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, Eostre. The word *Easter* does not occur in the Bible. (The KJV used the term once in Acts 12:4 where other English translations use *Passover*.)

The Western church observes Easter on Sunday, the first day of the new week, and sets it annually to follow the first new moon which occurs after the official start of spring (vernal equinox) which is why Easter Sunday can range from March 22<sup>nd</sup> through April 25<sup>th</sup> of a given year.



# THE PASSION WEEK IN JERUSALEM

- |                    |                                                                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ① Sunday           | Jesus descends from Bethany and enters the temple precincts               |
| ② Sunday Night     | Jesus returns to Bethany to lodge with His friends                        |
| ③ Monday           | Cleansing of the temple                                                   |
| ④ Tuesday          | Jesus teaches His disciples about the end of times on the Mount of Olives |
| ⑤ Tuesday          | Jesus teaches and disputes with authorities                               |
| ⑥ Thursday         | Jesus shares the Passover meal with His disciples                         |
| ⑦ Thursday evening | Jesus retires to Gethsemane with His disciples                            |
| ⑧ Thursday night   | Jesus is arrested                                                         |
| ⑨ Thursday/Friday  | Jesus is taken to the house of Caiaphas for a preliminary hearing         |
| ⑩ Friday daybreak  | Jesus before the Sanhedrin                                                |
| ⑪ Friday daybreak  | Jesus before Pilate                                                       |
| ⑫ Friday morning   | Jesus before Herod Antipas                                                |
| ⑬ Friday morning   | Jesus again before Pilate                                                 |
| ⑭ Friday morning   | Jesus is crucified                                                        |



## Devotional

## NOTES



## NOTES



“BEHOLD, MY SERVANT, whom I uphold;  
My chosen one in whom My soul delights.  
I have put My Spirit upon Him;  
He will bring forth justice to the nations.  
“He will not cry out or raise His voice,  
Nor make His voice heard in the street.  
“A bruised reed He will not break  
And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish;  
He will faithfully bring forth justice.  
“He will not be disheartened or crushed  
Until He has established justice in the earth;  
And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.”

Thus says God the Lord,

Who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
Who spread out the earth and its offspring,  
Who gives breath to the people on it  
And spirit to those who walk in it,  
“I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness,  
I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You,  
And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people,  
As a light to the nations,  
To open blind eyes,  
To bring out prisoners from the dungeon  
And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

ISAIAH 42:1-7 (NASB)

FURTHER READING

MATTHEW 18-21; HEBREWS 12:1-3

OBSERVE

At least 700 years before Christ’s birth, Isaiah prophesies about His coming, His ministry, His Spirit. How can this reassure you in your faith? Since Christ created the heavens and earth, in what ways can this embolden your faith in Him? How can we reframe our situation with the help of “so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us”? Why are you “so easily entangled in sin”? In what ways can you fix your eyes on Christ and run in faithful obedience? Opening the eyes of the blind was a miracle reserved for the Messiah yet His own people did not believe. What would “convince” you or “make you” believe He is the Messiah, fully God, fully man and capable of freeing prisoners of sin?

PRAY

Petition the Lord to give you new eyes to see Jesus as The Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Ask Him for such new sight that the things of this world that weigh you down are put into perspective.

NOTES



“NOW THIS DAY will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. ‘Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ‘On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you. ‘You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. ‘In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ‘Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land. ‘You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’”

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb. “You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. “For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you. “And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever.

EXODUS 12:14-32 (NASB)

FURTHER READING

EXODUS 12:14-32; MATTHEW 26:17-30; MARK 14:12-16;  
LUKE 22:7-13; HEBREWS 9:11-28

OBSERVE

What elements and/or themes of Passover stand out to you?  
What have we “lost” in our appreciation of the Lord’s Supper (commemoration of Passover fulfilled in Christ)? Has it become routine or ritualistic to you? How can you grow in appreciation for what Christ has accomplished “once for all” for your sin? How can you grow in appreciation of Christ’s determination to fulfill Passover knowing what was ahead of Him?

PRAY

Confess any indifference, apathy or routine attitude toward reminding yourself of the Passover and the Lord’s Supper. Confess any indifference toward the privilege of freely assembling as believers in His local church. Pray that He will increase your longing for His Word and gathering with His people to worship, pray, learn, and fellowship.

NOTES



THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD GOD is upon me,  
Because the Lord has anointed me  
To bring good news to the afflicted;  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to captives  
And freedom to prisoners;  
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord  
And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To comfort all who mourn,  
To grant those who mourn in Zion,  
Giving them a garland instead of ashes,  
The oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting.  
So they will be called oaks of righteousness,  
The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.

Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins,  
They will raise up the former devastations;  
And they will repair the ruined cities,  
The desolations of many generations.  
Strangers will stand and pasture your flocks,  
And foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers.  
But you will be called the priests of the Lord;  
You will be spoken of as ministers of our God.  
You will eat the wealth of nations,  
And in their riches you will boast.  
Instead of your shame you will have a double portion,  
And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion.  
Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land,  
Everlasting joy will be theirs.

ISAIAH 61:1-7 (NASB)

FURTHER READING

JOHN 13

OBSERVE

What was the major point of Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 61? Israel, His chosen people, have continued to struggle with belief in YHWH and His Word. Yet even in their stubbornness and sin, He loves and explains a future to them they would not “see.” God’s plan from all eternity included making a way through the Christ. In John 13, note one of Christ’s major themes in John is “glorification through suffering.” As His betrayal draws near, He is yet concerned for the eleven, knowing they will run away in fear, and face confusion. Knowing this, what is His command to them? What is the effect of this command on others?

PRAY

Confess any sin or apathy toward Christ’s work on your behalf. Acknowledge that He has loved you first and that you long to love Him well. Entreat Him to empower you to obey His “new commandment” and that you will see far reaching results.

NOTES



# GOOD FRIDAY & SATURDAY

Devotional

SURELY OUR GRIEFS He Himself bore,  
And our sorrows He carried;  
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten of God, and afflicted.  
But He was pierced through for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities;  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed.  
All of us like sheep have gone astray,  
Each of us has turned to his own way;  
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all  
To fall on Him.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted,  
Yet He did not open His mouth;  
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,  
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,  
So He did not open His mouth.  
By oppression and judgment He was taken away;  
And as for His generation, who considered  
That He was cut off out of the land of the living  
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?  
His grave was assigned with wicked men,  
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,  
Because He had done no violence,  
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

ISAIAH 53:4-9 (NASB)

## FURTHER READING

PSALM 22; HEBREWS 7:18-28; JOHN 18:1–19:30

## OBSERVE

Take extra time to read these sections. You may want to read them twice. Meditate on them. Look for things you may have overlooked in the past.

## PRAY

Petition God to reframe your view of Christ’s atoning work for your sin. Beyond the physical brutality of Christ’s crucifixion, know that His enduring the wrath of God and separation from the Father was far more difficult than any physical brutality. Thank Him, perhaps like you’ve never thanked Him before, for dying in your place, on your behalf, instead of you. Pray for friends and loved ones who do not know Christ.

## NOTES

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# RESURRECTION SUNDAY

Devotional

I WILL BLESS THE LORD who has counseled me;  
Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.  
I have set the LORD continually before me;  
Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.  
Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices;  
My flesh also will dwell securely.  
For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.  
You will make known to me the path of life;  
In Your presence is fullness of joy;  
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

PSALM 16:7-11 (NASB)

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, O gates,  
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
That the King of glory may come in!  
Who is the King of glory?  
The LORD strong and mighty,  
The LORD mighty in battle.  
Lift up your heads, O gates,  
And lift them up, O ancient doors,  
That the King of glory may come in!  
Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD of hosts,  
He is the King of glory. Selah.

PSALM 24:7-10 (NASB)

## FURTHER READING

PSALM 22; HEBREWS 7:18-28; JOHN 18:1-19:30

## OBSERVE

What does His resurrection mean in light of Scripture's consistent message that Christ will reign forever? If we believe that He lived, died, was buried, and resurrected from the dead, what have we to fear in this life?

## PRAY

Entreat the Lord to help you – by His Spirit – to live in hope of eternal life, resurrected life forever with Him. Ask Him to help you live by faith, serving Him well, until that day when you cross the threshold of this life into eternal life. Praise Him for the greatest gift ever given!





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