

What Did Jesus Do Each Day during Holy Week?

- [Dr. Roger Barrier](#)
- Preach It, Teach It
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Dear Roger,

What did Jesus do each day during his last week?

Sincerely, Anna

Dear Anna,

Jesus' last week began on Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday was so named because the people waved palm branches in honor of the Messiah and then laid them down to cushion His ride as Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

Palm Sunday also began the most premeditated, calculated week in the life of Christ.

The Gospels are not biographies. Each shares a few words about His birth, one sentence to describe Him from ages 18 to 30, and then concentrates two-thirds of

their content on a short 3½ years. The final third of every Gospel deals with one week in the life of Christ.

I want to take us on a journey through the last week in Jesus' life, so I have listed the major activities on each day.

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Palm Sunday

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On [Palm Sunday](#), six days before the crucifixion, Jesus made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey as prophesied in [Zechariah 9:9](#):

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, [righteous](#) and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Both the Old Testament prophecy and Jesus's fulfillment are chronicled in all four Gospels ([Matthew 21:1-9](#); [Mark 11:1-11](#); [Luke 19:29-44](#); [John 12:12-19](#)).

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

*"Say to Daughter Zion,
'See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"*

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

*“Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”* ([Matthew 21:1-9](#))

That evening, Jesus made His way back over the Mount of Olives to the village of Bethany and the home of his friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Throughout His ministry, He often chose to stay with His closest friends. Their home was one of those. Each evening during His last week, Jesus slept at their home ([Mark 11:11](#); [Luke 19:37](#)).

Monday

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In the morning, Jesus cursed the out-of-season fig tree for having no figs. That seems fair. However, it was really symbolic. In the Old Testament, figs represented the nation of Israel. Jesus was declaring that the nation of Israel had become spiritually bankrupt. Israel was dead out of season ([Matthew 21:18-22](#); [Mark 11:12-14](#)):

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it. ([Mark 11:12-14](#))

Then, in the afternoon, Jesus entered Jerusalem and cleansed the Temple. The temple courts had devolved into a marketplace for the buying and selling of animals to be sacrificed on the Temple altar. There, moneychangers plied their cheating trade. What was once a sacred place had become a pigsty.

Jesus was incensed: “This is my father’s house and you have made it a den of thieves” ([Luke 19:45-46](#), also see [Matthew 21:12-17](#); [Mark 11:15-19](#));).

Tuesday

Tuesday was a busy day.

Jesus spent all day in Jerusalem sparring with religious leaders, teaching parables, and healing the sick.

He taught the Parables of the Great Supper, the Good and Wicked Servants, the Ten Virgins, the Two Sons, The Owner of the Vineyard, The Wedding Banquet, and the Ten Talents ([Matthew 21:23-39](#); [Mark 11:20-12:44](#); [Luke 20:1-21:4](#); [John 12:20-50](#)).

Jesus also declared the Greatest Commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself” ([Matthew 22:37](#)).

He pronounced woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees:

“Woe to you” he said, “you don’t practice what you preach; you tie heavy loads upon the people’s shoulders, but you are unwilling to lift a finger to move them; you travel over land and sea to make one proselyte and when he becomes one, you make him twice as fit for [hell](#) as you are; you hypocrites; snakes! Brood of vipers! How can you escape being condemned to hell?; etc.!” ([Matthew 23:13-39](#), paraphrased)

But then, Jesus commended the Widow’s Mite when the widow placed all she had left into the Temple offering plate:

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.” ([Luke 21:1-4](#))

When the Pharisees tried to trap him with an economic issue about Roman taxes, Jesus said, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” ([Mark 12:17](#); [Luke 20:20-26](#)). He so astounded the Jewish leaders with His wisdom that they never tried to entrap Him again.

Secretly, to His disciples, Jesus once again predicted His coming death and resurrection. But the disciples had no idea what He was talking about As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem, He wept as He contemplated the coming destruction of the city ([Matthew 24](#)).

Jesus spent the rest of the evening teaching the eschatological Olivet Discourse which entailed the signs and wonders surrounding his second coming. This is the only place in Scripture where Jesus Himself shared his understanding of the [end times](#) ([Matthew 24-25](#); [Mark 13](#); [Luke 21:5-38](#)).

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” ([Luke 21:25-28](#))

Wednesday

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The highlight of the day occurred during the evening. Jesus was anointed by Mary in Bethany ([Matthew 26:6-13](#); [Mark 14:3-9](#); [John 12:1-8](#)).

Think about what a special moment this was for Jesus. In 36 hours, He would be on the cross—and the only person who figured out the crucifixion and coming resurrection was Mary. The disciples had no idea what was going on!

Imagine the understanding looks between Jesus and Mary as she washed his feet with perfume and worshiped.

Suddenly, Judas spoiled it all: “What a waste! And she’s spending it on you!” Can you imagine how much that hurt?

Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She has done a marvelous thing. She’s anointing my body for burial while I am still alive and can enjoy it.” Frankly, I’d rather have one rose right now while I can enjoy it than 10,000 after I’m dead and gone. I imagine that Jesus felt just like that.

They did not bathe often in those days. I’ve often wondered if Jesus got a whiff of Mary’s perfume as He hung on the cross. Then, He looked down from the cross and there was Mary. He must’ve thought, “God, bless her, she’s the only one who has figured it out.”

Later that night, immediately after supper, Judas arranged to betray Jesus ([Matthew 26:14-16](#)):

Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Thursday

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Jesus and His disciples observed the [Passover](#) and the Lord’s Supper in the Upper Room ([Matthew 26:17-30](#); [Mark 14:12-26](#); [Luke 22:7-30](#); [John 13:1-30](#)).

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?”

Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?” Jesus answered, “You have said so.”

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” ([Matthew 26:20-29](#))

Luke tells us that immediately after sharing the bread and wine, the disciples began arguing over which of them was the greatest ([Luke 22:31-38](#)). Jesus was

giving His life away, and they were arguing about who was the best! Can you imagine how much that hurt?

Then Jesus predicted Peter's denial, and Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same ([Matthew 26:31-35](#)).

But Jesus knew. He knew they would run.

That evening, Jesus gave His farewell discourse to the Disciples: "All men will know that you are my disciples by your love for one another" ([John 13:35](#)). (Also see [Matthew 26:31-35](#); [Mark 14:27-31](#); [Luke 22:31-38](#); [John 13:31-John 16:33](#)).

Jesus shared that he was going away. The disciples were quite dismayed.

Philip said, "You can't leave now! We don't know where you are going, and we don't know how to get there, and besides, we don't even know who you are!"

Jesus said, "Philip, you still don't know who I am?"

He's making the handoff to entrust his men with the ministry. They are on the one-yard line and they are fumbling the ball. They are not even sure who he is! He must go to the cross still wondering whether or not they'll get it ([John 14:5-14](#)).

Finally, before leaving the Upper Room, Jesus prayed His intercessory [prayer](#) for his disciples in [John 17](#):

"I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I'm coming to you. Protect them by your name that you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world but for those you gave me. I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." ([John 17:6-19](#), paraphrased)

Jesus took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane. While He prayed in agony, begging God to avoid the cup of suffering, He asked them to pray for Him. Because He was fully human (as well as fully God), He actually needed their comfort and support.

But they fell asleep and left Him all alone.

Can you imagine the disappointment in his voice as he replied, “Could you not pray for me one hour?” The disciples failed, so God sent angels to comfort Jesus ([Matthew 26:30](#), 36-46; [Mark 14:26](#), 32-42; [Luke 22:39-46](#)).

Judas betrayed Jesus. Jesus said to Judas, “Must you betray me with a kiss?” John identified the kiss as a “passionate lover’s kiss.”

Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they said.

Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.” ([John 18:2-9](#))

Jesus was arrested and taken to the house of Annas and then to Caiaphas the high priest early Friday morning.

Friday

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Filled with deep remorse, Judas hanged himself ([Matthew 27:3-11](#); [Acts 1:18](#)).

According to Jesus, Judas was predestined to betray him. No matter how we try to analyze [predestination](#) with free will, Judas could have returned to Jesus, repented, and asked for forgiveness. You know that Christ would have forgiven him. Jesus died for him, too.

Jesus was arrested and taken to the home of Annas and Caiaphas for an illegal trial by the Jewish leaders, who were making plans to have Jesus executed ([Matthew 27:2](#)).

The Jews dragged Him to Pilate and then to Herod where he was mocked, ridiculed, and crowned with thorns. Herod sent him back to Pilate. Neither ruler wanted to kill Him. But the people shouted to release Barabbas instead of Jesus ([Matthew 27:11-31](#); [Mark 15:1-20](#); [Luke 23:1-25](#); [John 18:18-19:16](#)).

Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.”

But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will. ([Luke 23:20-25](#))

While Jesus was being tossed around among Caiaphas, Pilate, and King Herod, Peter denied His Lord three times ([Matthew 26:57-Matthew 27:10](#); [Mark 14:53-72](#); [Luke 22:54-71](#); [John 18:12-27](#)).

Jesus and Pilate talked about truth. Pilate then condemned Jesus to die, had him scourged, and sent him to the cross. Pilate washed his hands ([Matthew 26:47-56](#); [Mark 14:43-52](#); [Luke 22:47-53](#); [John 18:1-11](#)).

Jesus was crucified ([Matthew 27:32-61](#); [Mark 15:21-47](#); [Luke 23:26-56](#); [John 19:17-47](#)); “When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left” ([Luke 23:33](#)). Jesus’ last words from the cross were:

1. [Matthew 27:46](#) tells us that about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
2. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” ([Luke 23:34](#)).

3. "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" ([Luke 23:43](#)).
4. "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit" ([Luke 23:46](#)).
5. "Dear Woman, here is your son!" and "Here is your mother!" ([John 19:26-27](#)).
6. "I am thirsty" ([John 19:28](#)).
7. "[It is finished!](#)" ([John 19:30](#)).

That night, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for Jesus' body. He and Nicodemus wrapped the body with spices and linen, per Jewish customs. Then they laid Him in the tomb, guarded by Roman soldiers ([John 19:38-42](#)).

Saturday

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Jesus was in the tomb.

He preached to the spirits in prison.

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey when God's patience waited. ([2 Peter 3:18-20](#))

There is a lot of discussion about what Christ may or may not have done on Saturday. Some use this verse to postulate that Jesus preached the gospel to the Old Testament people who lived before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Therefore, they had the opportunity of surrendering their lives to Christ as Lord and Savior.

Others teach that He went down into [hell](#) and experienced the horrors and suffering there. Maybe He just stayed in the tomb.

We just don't know for certain what He was doing on Saturday.

Sunday

This is the Resurrection!

And the angel said to the women, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, he was crucified. He has risen. He is not here; see the place where they laid him." ([Mark 16:5-6](#))

Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen clothes lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple [John] who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed. ([John 20:3-8](#))

What led John to believe?

Jesus was prepared for burial with layer after layer of linen burial cloths encircling his body, with spices distributed within its folds. When Jesus rose from the dead, He simply transmuted through the grave clothes and the wrappings, which then fell down intact where His body used to be.

Our salvation was completed in this [Holy Week](#) by our Savior's ultimate sacrifice; "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)).

Well, Anna,

I hope you find this helpful as you contemplate this last week of the life of Christ.

Love, Roger

[Web link: Crosswalk .com](#)