

# Chronological Bible Study

Week 44:

**Jesus Christ, Our Savior**

Matthew 26:57-28:20

Mark 14:53-16:20;

Luke 22:54-24:53

John 18:12-21:25

Acts 1:1-5:42

## Opening Reflection

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLbK4aAQzs>

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DIVINE CONSPIRACY: SALVATION CONFUSION

**VOL 3.0**



## **Introductions**

# Questions?

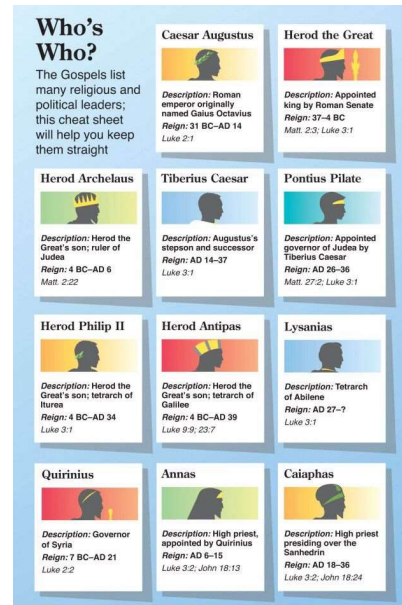
# Comments?

## **Summary of This Week's Readings**

- Jesus Before the Sanhedrin
- Jesus Before Pilate
- The Crucifixion
- Burial of Jesus
- Resurrection of Jesus
- Jesus' Appearances
- The Ascension
- Pentecost
- Early Christians in Jerusalem

# The Leaders in the Story

- There were Religious, political, and Roman leaders in Jesus' time
- Key religious leaders: Caiaphas and Annas
- Key Political leaders: The Herodians included Herod the Great, Herod Archelaus (ruler of Judea), Herod Philip II ( tetrarch of Iturea), Herod Antipas (tetrarch of Galilee), Lysanias (tetrarch of Abilene), Quirinius (governor of Syria)
- Roman leaders: Caesar Augustus (Roman emperor), Pontius Pilate (Governor of Judea). Tiberius was the emperor at the time of Jesus' crucifixion



There were several leaders in Jesus' time, including religious leaders, political leaders, and the Roman governor:

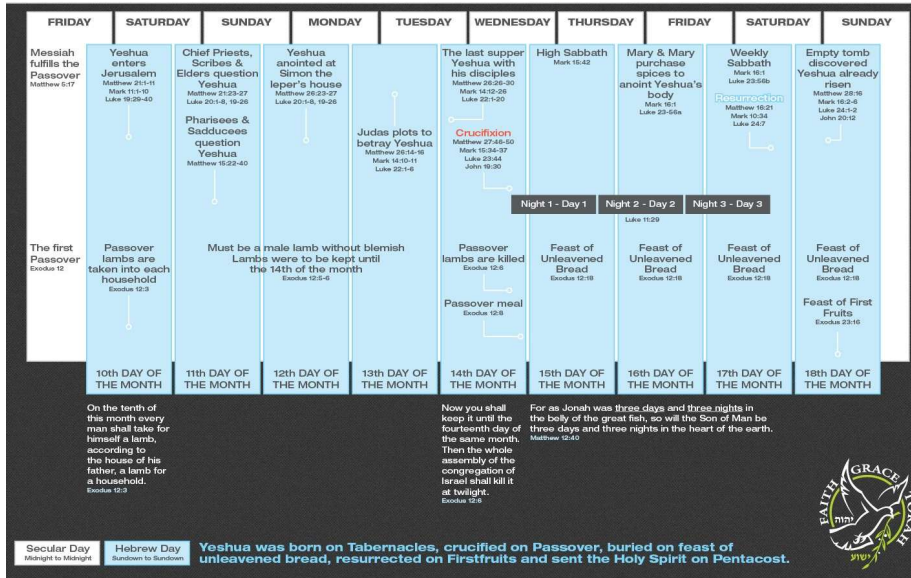
**Religious leaders:** Jesus criticized the religious leaders of his time, including the Pharisees and scribes, for their pride, hypocrisy, and lack of desire to change. The Jewish government, called the Sanhedrin, was made up of Sadducees and some Pharisees. The Sanhedrin presided over Jesus' trial. Caiaphas was the high priest presiding over the Sanhedrin. Annas was a high priest appointed by Quirinius, the Governor of Syria. We talked last week about the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin.

**Political leaders:** The Herodians were a political party that favored the rule of the Herods. The Galileans were a group that led a rebellion against foreign elements in northern Palestine.

**Roman leaders:** Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor who delivered Jesus to be crucified. King Herod the Great was appointed by Rome to rule over Judea, a mostly Jewish region. Caesar Augustus was emperor at the time of Jesus' birth and Tiberius Caesar was the emperor at the time of Jesus' crucifixion

# PROPHECY FULFILLED

## TIMELINE OF THE WEEK OF MESSIAH'S DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION



This timeline presents the events that are covered in the gospel related to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection



## Jesus Before the Sanhedrin

- Jesus taken to the house of the high priest Caiaphas after his arrest.
- Peter followed and waited in the courtyard.
- Jewish leaders were looking for false evidence against Jesus to have him put to death.
- The leaders declared Jesus was guilty of blasphemy. They spat in Jesus' face and beat him.



Those who had arrested Jesus took him to the house of **the high priest, Caiaphas**, where the teachers of the law and the elders had gathered together. He appeared before the Sanhedrin immediately as the Jewish leaders wanted him tried as quickly as possible. In their haste, the Sanhedrin does not appear to be concerned about a fair trial.

The Sanhedrin had in place a number of rules regarding the conduct of their own trials, none of which were followed in the case of Jesus:

- A trial could not take place at night or during the time of an important festival.
- The death penalty could not be passed immediately if a person was found guilty, the Sanhedrin had to wait overnight to pass sentence.
- All trials had to take place in the Hall of Hewn Stones, the official place for trials located in the temple.
- Two or three witnesses were needed and they had to agree on every detail. Anyone giving false evidence would receive the same punishment as the person on trial.

The Jewish leaders were looking for false evidence against Jesus to have him put to death, but they could not find any. False witnesses come forward, misquoting Jesus' words. Jesus is accused of threatening to destroy the temple. This could have been a distortion of Jesus' teaching about the resurrection, when he said his body (temple) would be raised in three

days. Jesus remained silent and again this fulfils Old Testament prophecy about the *Messiah*.

Eventually, Caiaphas demanded of Jesus **“Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”** Jesus answered him, **“So you say. But I tell all of you: from this time on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of the Almighty and coming on the clouds of heaven!”** Caiaphas declared this was *blasphemy*, so the guilty verdict was passed. The high priest tore his own clothes to show his horror at hearing blasphemy - this was a custom among very self-righteous Jews. The death sentence was then immediately passed on Jesus and they hit him and spat in his face. The trial appears to wrap-up just after daybreak.

Blasphemy is a religious offence, when a person says or does something regarded as being disrespectful to God. In the eyes of the Jewish leaders, when Jesus claimed to be God’s son he was insulting God. Blasphemy was taken very seriously. The punishment for blasphemy was death by stoning.

There were a number of reasons why the Jewish leaders wanted Jesus put to death:

- **He challenged their authority**, calling them **hypocrites**.
- **He broke their laws about Sabbath observance**. Jesus healed people on the Sabbath, but the Jewish leaders defined this as ‘work’ which was forbidden.
- **He mixed with people the Jewish leaders regarded as ‘unclean’** – sinners, prostitutes and tax collectors.
- **He made claims about himself that the Jewish leaders could not accept** – that he was God’s son and the promised saviour.





## Peter Denies Jesus

- All four Gospels relate this event.
- This public denial in direct conflict with the nature of discipleship
- The three denials are each progressively worse
- Peter's denials contrast with Jesus' confessions
- Peter repents his denial in tears
- Peter's denial did not change the love and trust Jesus felt for him.

Perhaps one of the hardest stories to read in the Gospels is when Peter, who loved and devoted himself to Jesus, then abandoned and denied Jesus not once, but three times. All four [Canonical Gospels](#) state that during Jesus's [Last Supper](#) with his disciples, he predicted that Peter would deny knowledge of him, stating that Peter would disown him before the rooster crowed the next morning.<sup>[a]</sup> Following the [arrest of Jesus](#), Peter denied knowing him three times, but after the third denial, he heard the rooster crow and recalled the prediction as Jesus turned to look at him. Peter then began to cry bitterly. This final incident is known as the **Repentance of Peter**

Peter was one of the twelve disciples most closely associated with Jesus. His denials are made in the face of accusation that he was "with Jesus", the term indicating the bond of discipleship. Peter and all the disciples would have been terrified, shocked, and devastated. They would have been crushed that Jesus, who was supposed to lead a revolt against Rome, was instead being arrested and sentenced to be crucified. The disciples would have wondered if they, too, were going to be arrested and put to death. Peter surely was full of fear and confusion. It was in this state that he denied knowing Jesus.

The [Gospel of Matthew](#) states that Peter denied Jesus "in front of everyone", thus making a public witness, affirming this with an oath.<sup>[9]</sup> Throughout his Gospel,

Matthew stresses the importance of public witness as an essential element of discipleship, stating in [Matthew 10:32–33](#): "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven." Peter's denial is in direct conflict with the nature of discipleship, as described by Matthew. Jesus's teaching also forbids the use of an oath.

The fact of Peter's denial did not destroy the love and trust that Jesus felt for him. Among the [Apostles](#), it was to Peter—who had confessed the sonship of Jesus (Matthew 16:16), who had been commissioned earlier to "lend strength" to his brothers (Luke 22:32), who had hesitated in his resolution at one crucial point (Mark 14:66–72), and who on the morning of the [Resurrection](#) "ran to the tomb" (Luke 24:12)—that the resurrected Christ first appeared.

Peter's antagonists in the discussion of his discipleship progress from a maid, to a maid plus a bystander, to a whole crowd. His denial progresses from a plea of ignorance, to a denial plus an [oath](#) and then to cursing and swearing with a total denial that he ever knew Jesus. The significance of *three* denials lies in its superlative force; it underscores the disciple's resolve to deny Jesus (see [Biblical numerology](#)). The sound of the rooster then brings a shock to Peter that Jesus had predicted the three denials. The contrast between Peter's and Jesus' behavior is striking. Jesus gives a true confession of his identity, even though it costs him his life. Peter denies even knowing Jesus.

Later, the risen Christ returned to the disciples and asked Peter three times if he loved Him. This account is understood as Jesus' beautiful restoration of Peter following his three-time denial. What a loving Lord to bring peace to Peter's heart following an incident which caused him deep pain and regret.

# The Apostle Peter

- Peter and brother Andrew were the first disciples Jesus called to follow him.
- Depicted in the Gospel as both rash and hasty, capable of anger, but also gentle but firm.
- Showed as being capable of great loyalty and love.
- What can we learn from Peter's life?
  - Jesus overcomes fear
  - Jesus forgives unfaithfulness
  - Jesus patiently teaches
  - Jesus sees us as He intends us to be
  - Jesus uses unlikely heroes

## Peter: A Complicated Character

Most readers can relate to Peter because of his numerous successes and failures during his journey with Jesus

### SUCCESSES

- Chosen as one of Jesus' apostles *Matt. 10:2*
- Walks to Jesus on the water *Matt. 14:29*
- Confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, which is the foundation of the church *Matt. 16:15-19*
- Witnesses the transfiguration *Matt. 17:1-8*
- Vows never to fall away and to die with Jesus if necessary *Matt. 26:33,35*
- Shares intimate moment with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane *Matt. 26:36-38*
- Follows Jesus after his arrest while the other disciples flee *Matt. 26:58*
- Witnesses the risen Lord separately *Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5*
- Reinstated by Jesus after his denial *John 21:15-19*
- Gives the first sermon and 3,000 people believe *Acts 2:14-41*
- Heals and raises the dead *Acts 3:1-10; 5:12-16; 9:34,39-40*
- Proclaims Christ even after being imprisoned for preaching *Acts 4:1-11,19-20*
- Assists Samaritans in receiving the Holy Spirit *Acts 8:14-17*
- Preaches to Gentiles, and they receive the Holy Spirit *Acts 10:27-28,34-35,44*
- Acknowledges that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by grace *Acts 15:5-11*
- Writes two epistles: 1 and 2 Peter

### FAILURES

- Loses faith while walking on the water and almost drowns *Matt. 14:30*
- Rebukes Jesus when he predicts his death *Matt. 16:21-23*
- Initially refuses to let Jesus wash his feet *John 13:8*
- Falls asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane *Matt. 26:40-41*
- Tries to protect Jesus and cuts off Malchus's ear *Luke 22:50-51; John 18:10*
- Denies Jesus three times *Matt. 26:69-75*
- Doesn't immediately believe when he sees the empty tomb *Luke 24:11-12; John 20:6-7,9*
- Questions the vision of the unclear instructions from the Lord *Acts 10:13-14*
- Leads Jews astray by separating from Gentiles *Gal. 2:11-13*



The Apostle Peter is one of the more well-known disciples, and he is certainly well-loved by Christians throughout history and across generations. Peter had a heart for serving Jesus and played a key role in helping establish and build the church. He gave his life to share the Gospel to help as many people as possible come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Peter was not a perfect person, but he is someone that Christians today can look to for guidance on having hearts devoted to Jesus. Through Scripture, we can learn some important things about who Peter was and the life he lived.

Throughout the Gospels, Peter's interactions with Jesus and the disciples reflect a leader who is impulsive, ambitious, self-assertive, and quick to commit without fully understanding the meaning of Jesus' words or actions. Peter exhibits the character of an outspoken leader of the disciples, willing to challenge Jesus actions and teachings (John 13:6). Peter was the first of the disciples to recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

Occasionally he is depicted as rash and hasty (Luke 22:33, etc.) or irritable and capable of great anger (John 18:10). Often he is pictured as gentle but firm and, as in his professions of love to Jesus, capable of great loyalty and love (John 21:15-17). The New Testament reports that Peter was unlearned in the sense that he was untrained in the [Mosaic Law](#) (Acts 4:13), and it is doubtful that he knew [Greek](#). He apparently learned slowly and erred time and time again, but later, when [entrusted](#) with responsibility, he

demonstrated that he was mature and capable.

From the Gospel accounts, Peter and his brother Andrew were the first disciples Jesus called to follow Him. We know that Peter's original name was Simon, but later Jesus renamed him to Peter, which means "rock" (see [John 1:42](#)). Peter was a fisherman and therefore, he spent a good amount of time on a boat catching fish to make a living for himself and his family. As a fisherman, Peter would have needed to be strong and fearless when it came to being on ferocious seas. Fishermen were tough and had to have a rough demeanor. We also learn from Scripture that Peter had a mother-in-law, which means he was married.

Peter is transformed in John 21 from the ambitious, self-motivated, impulsive, and inconsistent follower of Jesus, to the fully committed, charismatic leader of Christ's Church. Scripture teaches that Peter traveled, preached, went to prison, was beaten, wrote epistles (1 and 2 Peter), and gave his life fully to God's mission. Finally, we know that Peter was crucified and died as a martyr for Jesus.

What can we learn from Peter's life? Here are a few lessons:

**Jesus overcomes fear.** Whether stepping out of a boat onto a tossing sea or stepping across the threshold of a Gentile home for the first time, Peter found courage in following Christ. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" ([1 John 4:18](#)).

**Jesus forgives unfaithfulness.** After he had boasted of his fidelity, Peter fervently denied the Lord three times. It seemed that Peter had burned his bridges, but Jesus lovingly rebuilt them and restored Peter to service. Peter was a *former* failure, but, with Jesus, failure is not the end. "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" ([2 Timothy 2:13](#)).

**Jesus patiently teaches.** Over and over, Peter needed correction, and the Lord gave it with patience, firmness, and love. The Master Teacher looks for students willing to learn. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go" ([Psalm 32:8](#)).

**Jesus sees us as He intends us to be.** The very first time they met, Jesus called Simon "Peter." The rough and reckless fisherman was, in Jesus' eyes, a firm and faithful rock. "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion" ([Philippians 1:6](#)).

**Jesus uses unlikely heroes.** Peter was a fisherman from Galilee, but Jesus called him to be a fisher of men ([Luke 5:10](#)). Because Peter was willing to leave all he had to follow Jesus, God used him in great ways. As Peter preached, people were amazed at his boldness because he was "unschooled" and "ordinary." But then they took note that Peter "had been with Jesus" ([Acts 4:13](#)). Being with Jesus makes all the difference.



## Jesus Before Pilate

- Jewish leaders hand Jesus over to Pilate to put him to death.
- The leaders change the charge from blasphemy to claiming to be king of the Jews.
- Pilate does not think Jesus deserves the death penalty but does not want to anger the Jewish leaders.
- Throughout the trial, Jesus' innocence is stressed

Now that the Jewish leaders have found Jesus guilty of a crime deserving the death sentence, they have to take him to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. With Palestine an occupied country, only the Romans can put a person to death. This explains why Jesus has to have two trials. The chief priests and the elders put him in chains, led him off and handed him over to Pilate, the Roman governor. The *Sanhedrin* has found Jesus guilty of the religious offence of *blasphemy*. This would be of no interest to the Romans, so the Jewish leaders have to change the charge against Jesus from claiming to be the Son of God to saying he is the **King of the Jews**. In doing so they are emphasising the **political** rather than religious implications of claiming to be the *Messiah*. The Romans would take action for a political offence, particularly something that posed a threat to Roman rule.

Pilate is in a difficult situation. He does not think Jesus deserves the death penalty, but he does not want to anger the Jewish leaders. Pilate asked Jesus **“Are you the king of the Jews?”** Jesus answered **“So you say”**, but he said nothing in response to the accusations of the chief priests and elders, which surprised Pilate.

At every *Passover* festival the Roman governor could set free a prisoner chosen by the crowd. Pilate asked the crowd whether they wanted Barabbas or Jesus set free. **The chief priest persuaded the crowd to ask Pilate to set Barabbas free and have Jesus put to death.** They shouted for Pilate to *crucify* him. When Pilate saw that a riot might break out,

he washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, **“I am not responsible for the death of this man!”** The whole crowd answered, **“Let the responsibility for his death fall on us and on our children!”** Then Pilate set Barabbas free and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

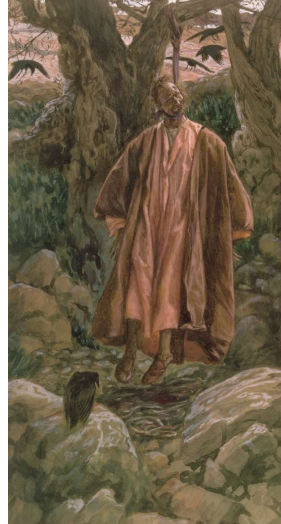
Throughout this trial, Jesus’ **innocence** is stressed:

- Pilate’s wife has had a dream telling her that Jesus is innocent and she sends a message to her husband about this.
- Pilate tries to avoid sentencing Jesus. It was a Passover custom for a prisoner, chosen by the people, to be released. Pilate attempts to use this custom by offering Jesus or Barabbas. Matthew describes Barabbas as a “notorious prisoner”, so he was probably a murderer.
- Pilate attempts to ask the crowd what crime Jesus has committed, but they shout “Crucify him!”
- Finally, Pilate publicly washes his hands to show that Jesus’ death is not his responsibility.
- In **protecting his position as governor**, Pilate has a guilty man released and has Jesus flogged then handed over to be crucified.



## The Death of Judas

- Judas tries to undo his deed when he realizes the consequences
- Judas is filled with remorse but not repentance
- Judas hangs himself
- The differing accounts are confusing but can be reconciled



Matthew and Luke (in the book of Acts) both mention some details of Judas's death, and reconciling the details between the two accounts has presented some difficulties. Matthew says that Judas died by hanging. Luke says that Judas fell into a field and that his body ruptured. Matthew says the Jewish leaders bought the field in potter's field and Acts says Judas bought the field.

Concerning how Judas died, here is a simple reconciliation of the facts: Judas hanged himself in the potter's field ([Matthew 27:5](#)), and that is how he died. Then, after his body had begun to decay and bloat, the rope broke, or the branch of the tree he was using broke, and his body fell, bursting open on the land of the potter's field ([Acts 1:18–19](#)). Note that Luke does not say that Judas died from the fall, only that his body fell. The Acts passage presumes Judas's hanging, as a man falling down in a field does not normally result in his body bursting open. Only decomposition and a fall from a height could cause a body to burst open. So Matthew mentions the actual cause of death, and Luke focuses more on the horror surrounding it.

Concerning who paid for the field, here are two possible ways to reconcile the facts: 1) Judas was promised the thirty pieces of silver several days before Jesus' arrest ([Mark 14:11](#)). Sometime during the days leading up to his betrayal of Jesus, Judas made arrangements to purchase a field, although no money had yet been transferred. After the

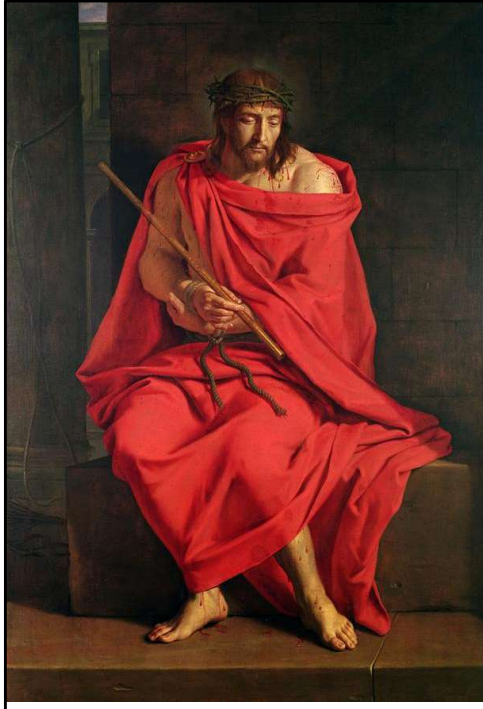


deed was done, Judas was paid, but he then returned the money to the chief priests. The priests, who considered the silver to be blood money, completed the transaction that Judas had begun and bought the field. 2) When Judas threw the thirty pieces of silver down, the priests took the money and used it to buy the potter's field ([Matthew 27:7](#)). Judas may not have purchased the field personally, but he provided the money for the transaction and could then be said to be the purchaser.

Horrified by the consequences of his action, Judas tries to undo his deed, but he fails. The Jewish leaders, who had just perpetrated gross injustice toward Jesus, refuse to disobey a minor law about the use of the money Judas gave them going into the treasury because it was blood money. The silver is called this because it purchases Jesus' bloody death. Instead of putting the money in the treasury, they use the money to buy a burial place for foreigners. The burial place is traditionally believed to have been in the southern end of the Hinnom Valley, just outside Jerusalem. Even when Matthew wrote this Gospel, it was still known as and called "the Field of Blood."

The text says Judas was filled with remorse. The Greek word used (*metamelomai*) is not the standard word used for repenting. Judas recognizes his horrible mistake but cannot undo the consequences of his actions. The only option he can countenance is hanging himself in despair.

The events of Judas' death fulfilled prophecy, as key events related to God's interaction with humanity form parallel patterns to those of their predecessors. Matthew creates a composite quotation from bits of [Zech 11:12–13](#); [Jer 19:1–13](#); [32:6–9](#). He refers only to Jeremiah in keeping with a convention of referring to the lesser known or less obvious of two passages in such a composite. "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, <sup>10</sup> and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."



## Jesus Mocked

- Humiliation was part of crucifixion
- The mocking by the Roman soldiers was all related to Jesus' crime of being King of the Jews
  - They dressed Jesus in a scarlet robe.
  - They placed a crown of thorns on his head.
  - They put a staff in his hand, then struck him with it.
  - They jeered at Jesus, saying "Hail, King of the Jews."
- Jesus never retaliated; He looked to God
- He asked God for forgiveness for the Roman soldiers when they crucified him.

Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace. They stripped off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him. Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and placed it on his head, and put a stick in his right hand. Then they knelt before him and mocked him. **"Long live the King of the Jews!"** they said. They spat on him and hit him over the head with the stick. Then they led him out to crucify him.

*Crucifixion* was not only a **very slow and painful death**, but it was intended to be **humiliating** as well. The soldiers mocking the prisoner before crucifixion is all part of the punishment.

Jesus' crime when presented to Pilate was claiming to be the **King of the Jews**, so the mocking by the Roman soldiers relates to this claim:

- They dressed Jesus in a scarlet robe.
- They placed a crown of thorns on his head.
- They put a staff in his hand, then struck him with it.
- They jeered at Jesus, saying "Hail, King of the Jews."

what did Jesus do when they hurled insults at Him? He committed no sin; no deceit was found in his mouth; he did not retaliate and made no threats; he entrusted himself to Him who judges justly (His Father). Jesus asks forgiveness for the Roman soldiers who are crucifying Him.

## Jesus' Crucifixion and Death

- Crucifixion was a cruel and degrading Roman punishment
- It was unusual to have the prisoner carry his cross
- It was customary to write the crime on a sign
- Jesus was mocked while dying
- Jesus was on the cross from noon – 3:00 pm
- Strange events occurred that affected the soldiers guarding the cross
  - The curtain of the temple was torn
  - There was an earthquake
  - Bodies of many people were raised to life
- Jesus' death is compared to a sacrifice



Crucifixion was widely used by the Romans at the time of Jesus as a means of execution. It must have been one of the cruellest and most degrading forms of death. As it was also a public spectacle, it was intended to deter others from committing similar crimes. Crucifixion was such a dreadful punishment it was never used on Roman citizens, only on the people they conquered. The methods of crucifixion varied, but the principal was always the same. The prisoner was attached to a **wooden cross** by means of **nails** through the **hands and feet** or the **wrists and ankles**. Sometimes rope was used as well as nails to secure the victim. The **outstretched arms**, taking most of the weight of the body, put **great strain on the ribcage**. This meant that the prisoner, already **weak from loss of blood**, died slowly from **suffocation**. Sometimes the victim's legs were broken to speed up their death, but this was not necessary in Jesus' case.

It was usual to force the prisoner to carry the cross-beam to the site of crucifixion. Jesus, however, had to have help. This was probably because he was already so weak from the torturing and whipping. A man from Cyrene named Simon was forced to carry Jesus' cross. They came to a place called **Golgotha**, which means '**the place of the skull**'. The drink of wine and gall (a bitter plant-based substance) which Jesus was offered was a type of **painkiller**, but **he refused it**. They crucified him and then divided his clothes among them by throwing dice.

It was the custom for the prisoner's crime to be written on a sign and attached to the cross. Jesus' sign said **"This is Jesus, the King of the Jews"**. The letters **INRI** appear in traditional pictures of the crucifixion. These are the four initial letters from the Latin translation of the sign – **Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum**. Then they crucified two bandits with Jesus.

Jesus' crucifixion has fulfilled *Old Testament* prophecies. As the soldiers cast lots for Jesus' clothes, Matthew's readers would remember the words of Psalm 22:18, **"They divided my garments among themselves and cast lots for my clothing."** Jesus was crucified with two thieves, fulfilling a prophecy of *Isaiah* that God's suffering servant would be treated like a criminal.

As Jesus was dying on the cross he was mocked by the people passing by. The chief priests and the teachers of the law and the elders made fun of him, **"He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He trusts in God and claims to be God's Son. Well, then, let us see if God wants to save him now!"** They laughed at his weakness. Even the bandits who had been crucified with Jesus insulted him.

Jesus was on the cross from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. In Jesus' day the first hour was 6am, so this means **he was on the cross from 12 noon to 3pm**. during this time **"darkness came over all the land"**. This darkness may have had a natural cause, but it is most likely **symbolic - the crucifixion of God's son is one of the darkest times in history**. In the *Old Testament* **darkness was a sign of God's judgement**, and one of the ten plagues that God sent to Egypt was darkness that covered the land for three days. The prophet Amos also spoke of God's judgement and that darkness would fall in the middle of the day.

As he was dying, Jesus cried out in his spoken language of Aramaic, **"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"** This translates as **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** Jesus was quoting from Psalm 22 and it sounds as if he is in **despair** and feeling totally **abandoned**, even by God. However, the psalm ends in triumph, acknowledging God as king. When Jesus cried out for a final time, he knew that he had done God's will and that his life was ending in **triumph**.

Some people misheard Jesus and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. There was the belief that Elijah would come and help a person in trouble.

When Jesus died there were a number of strange events, which may have been symbolic:

1. **"The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom"** – The temple curtain hung between the **Holy Place** and the **Holy of Holies**, where the Jews believed God dwelt. Only the high priest, once a year on the *Day of Atonement*, could ever go behind the curtain into God's presence. On this day, the sins of the whole nation were forgiven, ready for the start of the new year. The destruction of the curtain symbolises that **God is no longer to be thought of as living behind a curtain in the Jewish temple**, accessible only through the high priest. **With the death of Jesus, forgiveness of sins is now available to everyone**. Ordinary men and women can now approach God directly.

2. **“The earth shook and the rocks split”** – This shows **the power of God at work in the world** (Matthew records that there was also an earthquake at the *resurrection*).
3. **“The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life”** – Jesus’ death is not the end because God has power over death and will raise Jesus to life. **This eternal life is also promised to all people who have faith in Jesus.**

These events have an amazing effect on the soldier who is guarding the cross. He has probably witnessed many crucifixions, but the impression left on him by Jesus leads him to exclaim **“Surely he was the Son of God!”**

Christians believe that Jesus’ death on the cross was no ordinary death. It can be compared to a **sacrifice**. Jesus was punished for **all the things that sinful humanity has done wrong** so they could receive **forgiveness from God**. In summary, Jesus died:

- to save humans from the consequences of sin
- because no-one else was willing or able to pay the price for the sin of the whole world
- to restore humans to a right relationship with God



## Jesus is Buried

- Jesus buried on the eve of Sabbath
- Joseph of Arimathea provided a tomb for Jesus
- Jesus' burial is important because it proved Jesus was dead and it fulfills prophecy.

The burial of Jesus is described in the New Testament and is considered a significant event for Christians. According to the Gospels, the burial of Jesus took place after his crucifixion on the eve of the Sabbath

Romans typically left the corpses of crucified people unburied for wild animals or birds to scavenge. If no-one claimed the body of a crucifixion victim, it would be thrown in a common burial pit. Jews believed in burying everyone, however modestly. Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy man and disciple of Jesus who asked Pilate for Jesus' body, took it down, and wrapped it in linen. Many people believe that he could have been a member of the *Sanhedrin* and a quiet supporter of Jesus. Joseph placed Jesus in his own new tomb that he had cut out of solid rock. The tomb had a low doorway and a large stone that was rolled into place to close the entrance. The new, rock-hewn tomb and the devotion Joseph lavishes on the body give Jesus a very honorable burial

Joseph begins preparing Jesus' body for burial by placing it in a clean linen cloth or "shroud". John's Gospel fills in some other details, such as another secret disciple, Nicodemus, unveiling himself at this critical moment to aid Joseph ([John 19:39 - 40](#); cf. [3:1 - 21](#)). Together they prepare Jesus' body. The Jews did not practice cremation or full embalming of corpses, but the body was prepared for burial by washing it, dressing it in special garments, and packing it in the linen cloth with fragrant spices. Along with stifling

the smell of the body decaying, myrrh and other aromatics represented the preservation of the body, which to the Jewish mind was the prerequisite of resurrection. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus perform acts even more significant than they themselves understand.

After the body is wrapped in the linen cloth, Joseph places it in his own new tomb cut out of the rock. During this era burial was generally in cave-like tombs. The tomb was a rectangular underground chamber cut into rock, sometimes in an abandoned quarry. It was accessed through a low entry vault, closed with a stone that could be rolled back and forth, mostly to protect the body from wild animals that fed on carcasses. The dead were laid out on benches cut parallel into the rock or placed in perpendicular burial slots or recesses cut into the sides of the tomb. The body remained in its niche until the flesh decayed (from one to three years), whereupon the bones were collected and placed in ossuaries (small, carved stone, bone-box receptacles). After Jesus' body is laid in the tomb, Joseph rolls a large stone in front of the entrance. He and Nicodemus return to the city. Although part of the preparation for burial has been accomplished at this point, because the Sabbath is approaching, they cannot work with the dead and thus must return after the Sabbath to complete the preparations.

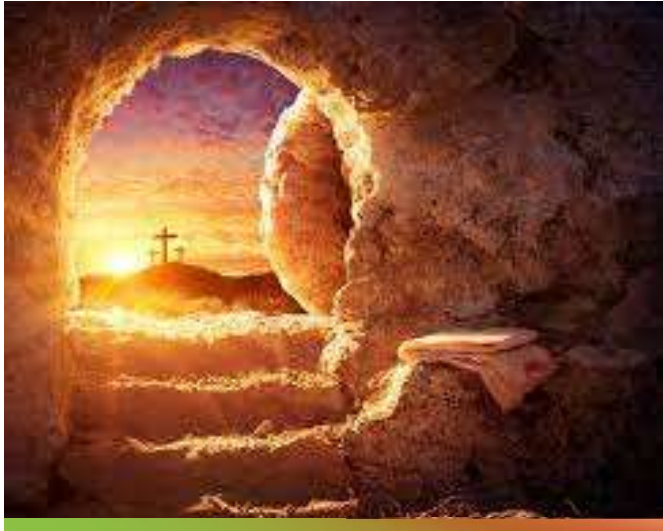
Matthew tells us that at least two of the women who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion — Mary Magdalene and the "other Mary" (cf. [Mark 15:47](#)) — sit opposite the tomb and witness the sad and lonely ceremony. These faithful women still stay with Jesus even in death. It is even possible that these women (and perhaps others) who have followed Jesus from Galilee and who have been close to Jesus and his family worked together with Joseph and Nicodemus to prepare Jesus' body for burial.

The possible locations for the tomb of Jesus include the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Garden Tomb. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (his mother) were present when Jesus was buried. Jesus' female followers also followed Joseph and saw where he placed Jesus' body.

The burial of Jesus is considered important for several reasons, including:

- It proves that Jesus was dead.
- It fulfills prophecy.





## The Resurrection

- Cornerstone of Christian faith
- Women return to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus but He has received a higher anointing from God
- Mark's Gospel begins with God's messenger announcing what God was about to do and closes with God's messenger announcing what God has done.
- Jesus' disciples told to tell of the miracle.
- The resurrection revokes death, destruction, and sin.
- Disciples told to return to Galilee

The resurrection is a cornerstone of the Christian faith, provides proof of Christ's claims, and fulfills Old Testament prophecy. It is also seen as evidence that God will judge the world in righteousness, and that believers will be resurrected in the future.

THE TIME NOTICES — “PREPARATION Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath)” ([15:42](#)) and “when the Sabbath was over” ([16:1](#)) — explain why the women do not try to anoint Jesus sooner. They cannot purchase spices or travel about on the Sabbath, but they move into action as soon as they can. They obviously do not anticipate Jesus' resurrection and do not go to the tomb to check if his prediction that he will be raised on the third day might be fulfilled. Mark makes it plain that they go on the third day because they cannot come earlier. The rising of the sun dispels the darkness that covered the whole land during the crucifixion ([16:2](#)). The beginning of this week marks the dawning of a new beginning for humanity. In Scripture, God's help comes to the afflicted especially in the morning: “Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” ([Ps 30:5](#); see [59:16](#); [90:14](#); [143:8](#)).

The women must still be grief-stricken because they give no thought to how they will move the stone before they set out. Their anxiety about the stone, however, allows the narrator to emphasize its great size. It cannot easily be rolled back; only a miracle can move it. The women do not come to the tomb with any sense of hope, and their fretting about the

stone creates dramatic tension. When “they look up,” they realize that they have been anxious about entering a tomb already open.<sup>1047</sup> Even when they discover the stone removed, they are still unprepared for the news about what it means. They come to the tomb wondering how the stone can *be* moved; they leave wondering how the stone could *have been* moved. They come to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus; they learn that he has received a higher anointing from God.

Mark is not interested in telling the story of how the stone was moved. The tomb is open so that the women can enter and see that Jesus is not there. But the tomb is not empty. Looking into the tomb, the women find a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right, the favorable side that bodes well. Mark’s Gospel began with God’s messenger announcing what God was about to do ([1:2 - 8](#)); it closes with God’s messenger announcing what God has done.

Given male dominance in both Jewish and Roman societies, is that with the “strong” males having fled, the only eyewitnesses who can testify to Jesus’ death, burial, and empty tomb are these “least,” the women disciples. Jews would not have fabricated this story because a woman could not even testify in court – their seeing Jesus would not make the event credible.

Remember the story of Lazarus – he was raised to a mortal “natural” body” – Jesus, however was raised to an immortal, “spiritual body.”

Throughout the Gospel, Jesus has been on the move; nothing changes after his resurrection. He is not in the tomb for the women to cling to and embrace. Yet the story cannot end with a joyful reunion because the resurrection is only the beginning of the gospel that must be proclaimed throughout the world. The women must go to the disciples, who must in turn go to Galilee. This command is the first time that Jesus’ followers are told to tell something about him. The crucifixion and the resurrection, therefore, mark a turning point. There is no need for silence or secrets now (see [9:9](#)). As Marcus points out, “Whereas before those events Jesus commanded secrecy and open proclamation was disobedience, now Jesus commands open proclamation and secrecy is disobedience.” The resurrection revokes death and destruction, and it also revokes sin.

The announcement that “he is going ahead of you” is as important as the word that “he is not here.” The verb used here (*proago*) does not simply mean that Jesus has gone on ahead of his disciples. Thucydides uses the verb for leading troops forward, and Polybius uses it for a commander making an advance. Earlier, Jesus connected the promise that he would go before them to Galilee to the image of shepherd ([14:27 - 28](#)). Jesus has fed his flock ([6:34](#)) and has laid down his life for them, which caused them to be scattered. As the risen Lord, he will regather them into the fold. Just as the earthly Jesus led his frightened disciples to Jerusalem by going before them ([10:32](#)), so the risen Jesus goes ahead of them still, leading the church.

The command to go to Galilee does make one thing clear: Jerusalem is not the center of God's movement. The disciples' future lies elsewhere. Jerusalem has become the city of the fruitless and doomed temple, the stronghold of hostility to the gospel, and the place of Jesus' savage execution. In the Gospel, Galilee has been the place of calling, faith, compassion, healing power, and authority. By going back to Galilee where Jesus will be, the disciples go back to the promising birth of their call to discipleship. There they can regroup and begin again the journey of discipleship. In Galilee the disciples will physically see Jesus, but "seeing" also has to do with spiritual perception ([2:5](#); [4:12](#); [8:18](#); [15:39](#)) — something that has eluded the disciples more often than not in the narrative. They will also see him "in the sense of gaining true insight into his identity." Jesus will heal them of their blindness so that they will understand fully who he is, what his life and death mean, and how they must now follow him. The disciples' shabby performance during the last week of Jesus' life has exposed them as sinners. Now Jesus will regather them as a new people who take up their cross, following after him and proclaiming God's triumph over Satan, sin, and death. Their eyes and ears will be open; they will know more about where the road leads.

## Meaning of Jesus' Death and Resurrection

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGbNw855ksw>



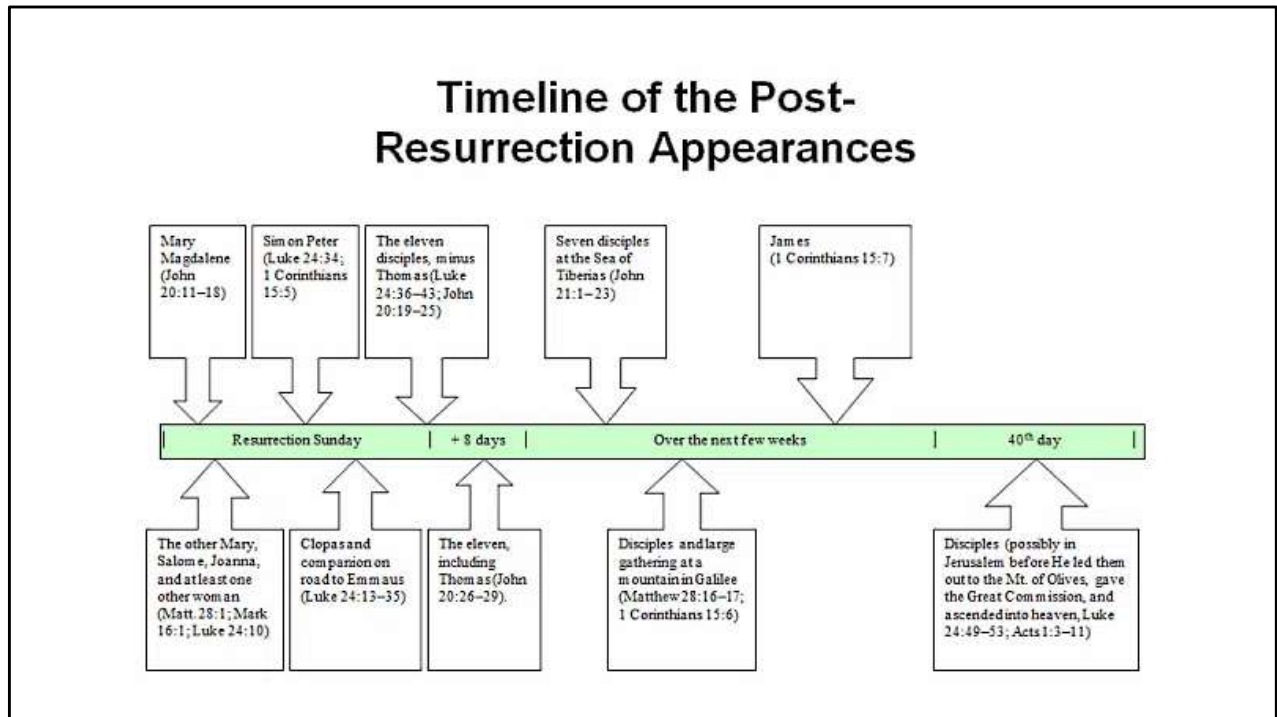
Any Questions/Comments?



## Discussion

If Jesus came today, who would “crucify” him? What would be the charges against him? Where would you be?

## Timeline of the Post-Resurrection Appearances



Following His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus made a number of appearances to his followers—no less than ten of these are recorded in Scripture. Beginning on Resurrection Sunday, He “showed himself alive . . . by many infallible proofs” ([Acts 1:3](#), KJV) and instructed His apostles and many other followers periodically for forty days. He then ascended from Mount Olivet, near Jerusalem, while the apostles watched ([Acts 1:9–12](#)). To sort out the verses in question, we need to examine several appearances in terms of when and where they occurred and who witnessed them. Paul included a summary statement in 1 Corinthians 15 that provides information about the appearances: *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.* ([1 Corinthians 15:3–7](#))

The various Gospels relate different appearances. The different accounts are not contradictory, but together form a more complete story than any individual account. It is only in the book of Acts that Luke informs us that in fact, Jesus appeared to the disciples for a period of 40 days—a significant number, of course. Why did Jesus appear repeatedly over a period of 40 days? Firstly, to present the disciples with “many infallible proofs,” as Luke

says in Acts 1:3. If Jesus had only appeared once or twice, a few days apart, the disciples might have reason to doubt their experience. Repeated appearances in different places over an extended period of time, accompanied by proofs that were undeniably persuasive, provided the disciples with the kind of assurance they needed in order to be official public witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus removed any ground for reasonable doubt about the reality of the resurrection. Second, Jesus took time to teach the disciples, as He did the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27) and the eleven and others gathered together (24:44–49). How many hours did Jesus devote to teaching His disciples during these 40 days? We cannot be sure. We also have to remember that Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would give the disciples understanding (John 16:13) and that He had, even before Pentecost, given the disciples a downpayment on the coming Pentecostal blessing when He breathed upon them and said "Receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:21). What we can be sure of is that Jesus' teaching during this 40 day period was rather extensive.

The 40 day period itself suggests as much, for it corresponds to Moses receiving the law from Yahweh at Mt. Sinai. Though Jesus is not with His followers day and night for the whole 40 day period, we have to remember that many or most of His closest disciples were together for most of that time. When Jesus taught the disciples on the road to Emmaus, their hearts burned within them as they heard His words (Luke 24:32): surely a common experience for the men and women who heard Jesus' post-resurrection instruction! And, just as the Emmaus disciples rushed back to Jerusalem to tell others of the risen Jesus, we can only imagine that those to whom Jesus presented Himself thought and spoke constantly of Jesus' resurrection and the wonderful things He had been teaching them. We must assume, therefore, that even when Jesus was not directly present and instructing His disciples, they were comparing notes, so to speak, as they reflected together on what Jesus had taught them.

Peter's Pentecostal sermon is evidence of the overwhelming transformation in Biblical understanding as a result of Jesus' 40-day instruction. Imagine: when and how did Peter gain his new understanding of the prophecy of Joel 2:28–32? He certainly could not have understood this prophecy before Jesus rose from the dead. Shortly after quoting Joel, Peter teaches his hearers that Psalm 16 is actually David speaking as a prophet and foretelling the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:25–31)! No one in ancient Israel read Psalm 16 like this before Jesus's new life, nor did anyone afterwards, except the Apostles. I think we can be relatively certain that Peter learned this way of reading Psalm 16 during that 40-day instruction period—though it is, of course, always possible that the Holy Spirit inspired Peter on the spot. Finally, Peter shows an utterly new understanding of Psalm 110:1: "Yahweh said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Peter explains that God resurrected Jesus, that Jesus ascended to the right hand of God, and that, therefore, as seated at the right hand of God, Jesus has been officially installed as both "Lord" and "Christ" (Acts 2:33–36). Peter's sermon represents a revolution in Peter's understanding of what we call the Old Testament, and seems to give us some idea of what Jesus was teaching during the 40 days. Jesus' post-resurrection teaching was about the "kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), which was in fact the focus of Jesus' pre-resurrection teaching also.



Jesus' resurrection was indeed an event of a single day— resurrection day —but it is profoundly important for Christians to remember that there is a resurrection *season* that commemorates the 40 days that Jesus instructed His disciples, the 40 days that He offered proof so undeniable that the disciples' confidence was boosted beyond the level of any reasonable doubt. In those 40 days, Jesus—proving himself the first Christian theologian— opened the disciples' minds to see what Scripture was all about. It was about the Messiah Jesus. The King Himself was the focus and center: a King that no one would have imagined — a crucified King who was raised from the dead to be seated at God's right hand!

It took 40 days of instruction for the disciples to begin to digest the meaning of the resurrection. Even more, of course, we have to assume that they spend their whole lives thinking about, meditating on, and seeking to understand the implications of Jesus' resurrection.

## The Book of Acts

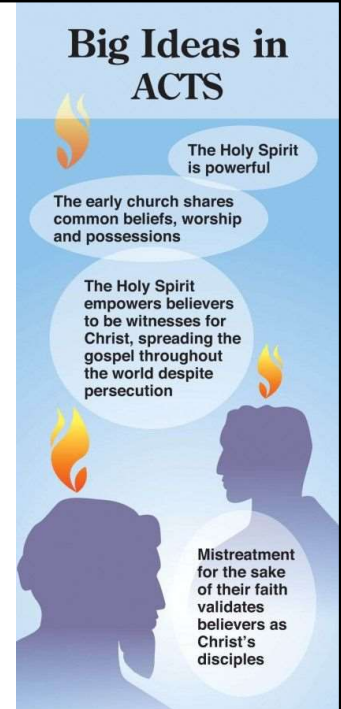
[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGbNw855ksw>



## Overview of the Book of Acts

- What the apostles, empowered by the Holy Spirit, did in the 30 years following Jesus' ascension.
- The book was written c 61-62 AD in Greek.
- Both the Book of Luke and Acts were written to the Gentile Theophilus, who was likely a patron of the church.
- Luke had direct access to Paul and was an eyewitness of many of the recorded events.
- Luke, the author, wrote as an historian and to show that Christianity and the church had become the legitimate heir of Israel.
- The book opens and closes with explaining and proclaiming the Kingdom of God.
- Forgiveness of sins proclaimed through faith in Jesus, Israel's Messiah rather than through animal sacrifice.
- The Holy Spirit, through the church, was poured out on the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles.



This book describes the deeds Jesus' apostles did, empowered by the Holy Spirit, in the 30 or so years following the Ascension of Jesus to heaven. Luke, the author, wrote as an historian and to show that Christianity and the church had become the legitimate heir of Israel. (and the Scriptures of Israel). God spreads the kingdom during the transition from Israel to the church. The book opens with Jesus's explanation of the kingdom of God and closes with Paul's proclaiming the kingdom of God. Forgiveness of sins was proclaimed through faith in Jesus, Israel's Messiah rather than through animal sacrifice. The Holy Spirit, through the church, was poured out on the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles.

## The Ascension

- Takes place 40 days after the resurrection at the Mt. of Olives
- David's heir ascends to reign and the great high priest completes the presentation of the atoning sacrifice.
- Fulfillment of Daniel 7:13-14.
- The Messiah reigns with God
- The Messiah is a sacrificial atonement where our sins are fully and finally forgiven with Jesus, both the offerer and offering, presented to God.
- The present age of Jesus' absence, then, is the period of his active priestly service, as he continues to intercede for us in the presence of God the Father.



The Bible Story of the [Ascension of Jesus](#), found in the first chapter of Acts, describes the ascent of Christ from the Earth to the Heavenly realm. According to Acts, the ascension of Jesus takes place 40 days after the [Resurrection](#) in the presence of his disciples at the Mt. of Olives. Christ is risen after advising them to stay in Jerusalem until the arrival of the Holy Spirit. As He rose, a cloud obscured Him from their view, and two men in white arrived to tell them that he will return "in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." In Christian doctrine, the Ascension is correlated with the deification of Jesus, meaning that through His Ascension, Jesus took his seat at the right hand of God: "He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." The Ascension is a significant event in the Christian faith, symbolizing Jesus' victory over sin, hell, and Satan. It also represents Jesus' reunion with God, where he will await his return to Earth.

Jesus connects the Ascension with his work of dying and rising again. When Mary Magdalene sees him in the garden after his resurrection, he's not simply strolling about, enjoying the fact that everything has been accomplished. No, he's a man on a mission, and there is still another: "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father" (Jn. 20:17). The Ascension is the gateway to his priestly work of intercession, a prerequisite for his sending of the Holy Spirit, and the commencement of his heavenly reign.

The Ascension is the capstone of everything he has done in his passion. It is the triumphal

act that crowns both the royal and priestly ministries of the Messiah: in which David's heir ascends to reign and the great high priest competes the presentation of the atoning sacrifice. The Ascension appears to be an exact fulfillment of the prophetic vision of Daniel 7:13–14. In that vision, the Son of Man, surrounded with clouds, approaches the throne of the Ancient of Days and is given the dominion of an everlasting kingdom. Notice that the prophecy does not show the Messiah's rule beginning with an earthly reign, but quite specifically with a heavenly one. If Jesus had remained on earth and tried to claim his kingship, then he could not have been the Messiah—for the true Son of Man had been prophesied as ascending into the presence of God, there to be given his reign. The Ascension is the triumphal coronation of the messianic king. Jesus has done what good kings in the ancient world were expected to do: he has saved his people from their enemies. He has defeated the powers of sin, Satan, and death, and now he makes his ascent to the throne—just as the Davidic kings of old made their ascent back to Jerusalem after a successful military campaign.

Having accomplished these kingly acts, Jesus approaches the Ancient of Days and is crowned with splendor and honor. And although we still await his return, along with the full and final manifestation of his reign, that reign has already begun. Now that he is on the throne, seated at the right hand of the Father, the signs expected of the messianic age are being fulfilled before our eyes: the Spirit has been poured out and the nations have begun to turn their hearts to the worship of Israel's God.

An even more compelling array of biblical images connects Jesus' Ascension with the priestly work of the Messiah. Early Christians considered Jesus' death on the cross to be a sacrifice of atonement (Rom. 3:25), an act whereby our sins are fully and finally forgiven. However, coming from the context of Israel's temple culture, it would have struck most Jewish believers as oddly incomplete to say that the Cross was all there was to Jesus' ritual of sacrifice. As anyone in the ancient world knew, the penitent sinner needed a further step in the ritual of atonement: a sacrifice to be slain and a high priest to bear the sacrificial blood into the presence of God. The clearest parallel is the annual ritual of the Day of Atonement, when the sacrifice for the people's sin was killed on the great altar outside the temple doors. But that was only the first part of the ritual. To Jewish ears, the claim that the Crucifixion alone was the sacrifice of atonement would have sounded like saying that the sacrifice had been slain on the altar and no more. What about the next step of the ritual? The high priest was to take the blood of the sacrifice and ascend the steps of the temple—to enter into the sanctuary of the Lord surrounded by billowing clouds of incense (Lev. 16:11–13). The high priest would step up into that cloud, vanishing from the sight of the watching throngs in the temple courts, and then proceed into the Holy of Holies. There, in the presence of God, the high priest would present the blood of the sacrifice, completing the ritual of atonement and interceding for the people. Then he would emerge, coming back down through the cloud of incense in the same way the crowds had seen him leave, bearing the assurance of salvation back to the people of God. This is precisely what the book of Hebrews says happened in Jesus' heavenly ascent. Hebrews 6–10 paints a picture of the scene enacted when Jesus made his entrance into the presence of God, drawing on Day of Atonement imagery to portray Jesus as both the offering and the offerer. While the Holy of Holies was merely an

earthly representation of the heavenly reality, Jesus enters the heart of that reality—into the very presence of the Father.

The theological implication here is that the Ascension was the next necessary step in the ritual after the Cross. This does not imply any insufficiency in what Jesus did in his saving work on the Cross—only that this completed sacrifice was always intended to be followed by another step in the process, which was bearing his sacrifice into the true Holy of Holies. There are priestly symmetries in most of the portrayals of the Ascension. The Ascension is preceded by a period of 40 days (Acts 1:3), just like the Day of Atonement in rabbinical Jewish tradition. Before his ascent, Jesus lifts his hands to bless his disciples, and then goes up into the presence of God (Luke 24:50–51)—which is the same set of actions Aaron performed before entering the tabernacle to complete the first great ritual of sacrifice (Lev. 9:22–23). Special mention is made of the cloud into which Jesus vanishes (Acts 1:9), which echoes both Daniel’s prophecy of the Son of Man and the visual imagery in the Day of Atonement. If Jesus was the Great High Priest presenting a sacrifice in the heavenly tabernacle, he would have to ascend to perform that very function. This perspective adds a new layer of meaning to our current period of history. The Day of Atonement ritual wasn’t a matter of just going up into the temple and God’s presence, but also coming back again. The present age of Jesus’ absence, then, is the period of his active priestly service, as he continues to intercede for us in the presence of God the Father.

The first church to commemorate the Ascension was built on the site in 378, but it was destroyed by the Persians in 614. The church was rebuilt, destroyed again, and rebuilt once more by the Crusaders. The final church was destroyed by Muslims, leaving only an octagonal structure that remains today. This structure is now used as an oratory and is believed to contain a stone that bears the imprint of Christ's feet.



## Pentecost

- Pentecost is a long-standing Jewish harvest festival that is celebrated annually 50 days after Passover.
- For Christians, the event on Pentecost in Acts marks the beginning of a new world empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- In the Old Testament windstorms with fire or lightning are associated with God's presence and the formation of a temple.
- With Pentecost God now dwells within the community of Jesus followers – a living temple.

Pentecost is a long-standing Jewish harvest party, a Christian celebration as old as Jesus' Church, and a Greek word that means "fiftieth." This is a major Jewish harvest party—also called *Shavu'ot*, or the Feast of Weeks—that happened 50 days after Passover. It is one of three main festivals that brought hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to Jerusalem for a big celebration.

And the Pentecost moment described in the New Testament is a 1st-century event in Jerusalem where people's heads caught fire (sort of). At this event, an indoor windstorm swirled through a packed house party, and everyone was baffled—some panicked. And then the guys with fiery heads became spontaneously multilingual. By itself, the Pentecost story in Acts looks kind of bizarre. But seeing what happened on the day of Pentecost within Scripture's larger narrative makes the story more clear. Luke, the author of Acts, is a historian, not a news reporter. He's telling us what happened by drafting a story that intentionally maps onto repeated Old Testament patterns and themes. And this is not the first time that a divine, brilliant fire shows up out of nowhere and doesn't burn anything up. When we see the first Pentecost in context, it's not just about God giving people instantaneous multilingual skills or the fiery sign of the [Holy Spirit's](#) presence. This story also marks the beginning of a new world.

In the Hebrew Bible, mysterious windstorms with fire or lightning are consistently



associated with two things: God's presence and the formation of a [temple](#). [Yahweh](#) becomes present to [Moses](#) through the fire of a burning shrub. In that famous scene, God speaks in Moses' own language and tells him he's standing on holy ground, implying this place is like a temple. And then God promises to empower Moses to help him set Israel free from oppression ([Exod. 3Exodus 3](#)). Moses delivers his people from slavery, and they travel to Mount Sinai, where a bigger fire blazes on the mountain as a wind and fire (lightning) storm kicks up ([Exod. 19:18-20Exodus 19:18-20](#)). Like before, this fire signals God's presence, marking this mountain as God's dwelling place and a symbolic temple. The people are confused, amazed, and even panicking in fear ([Exod. 20:18Exodus 20:18](#)). But God assures them that he is partnering with them for their good, not to harm them. And he gives [ten commandments](#) for life that everyone agrees to follow. Later, when the tabernacle is built on that same mountain, God shows up in a huge column of fire, hovering above it. The fire signals God's presence and marks this space as his dwelling place. When Israel builds a permanent temple, the same fire shows up as God's "dwelling glory." This is a tangible sign that God's presence has settled in his temple, in the midst of his people's community life. The stories of Moses and the burning bush, Mount Sinai, the tabernacle, and the temple all include fire that shows up when God's presence arrives and marks his dwelling space or temple. In [Acts 2Acts 2](#), Luke is hyperlinking to these previous divine-fire scenes to give a background to the Pentecost story. The divine fire has previously rested on Yahweh's temple spaces, so where does it rest in this scene? "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them." [Acts 2:1-3](#) It's a temple made out of "each one of them." It's made of people. People will meet with God not in a geographic place or constructed space but in connection with those who choose to trust and follow Jesus. God's fire shines with power and harms nobody, and it ignites a cosmic revolution, the Church. The story tells us that God now dwells within the community of Jesus followers. This living temple is made of people who operate like Jesus, ending fear and oppression with love and peacefully teaching humanity how to love and bless one another. In this sense, Pentecost marks the beginning of a new world. The old world creates enemies and divides people, falsely claiming that some are loveable and others are throwaways, but not so in the Kingdom of God! In God's empire, all people mutually love one another without partiality).

Pentecost sparked an international effort to include everyone, Jewish and non-Jewish, into God's family, which is one reason we see the "speaking in tongues" miracle happening. In Greek, "tongues" can refer to real human languages, and that seems to be Luke's point in [Acts 2:8Acts 2:8](#). He captures the question everyone was asking: "How is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?" Jesus' apostles are all Jewish and from a small world, the northern Galilean part of Israel. They speak the same language. So getting the [good news of Jesus](#) to the whole world with them alone would be tricky. Unless—what if the whole world came to them, and they quickly became multilingual? With the festival of Pentecost hundreds of thousands of pilgrims were in Jerusalem. The whole world was before the apostles and with this miracle they could understand each other. The

people hear Jesus saying, “You shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth”). That’s a whole-world statement—nobody gets left behind.

For many liturgical and other church traditions, Pentecost Sunday happens 50 days after Easter, and it celebrates the beginning of the Church. The apostles are [witnesses](#) to Jesus’ resurrection and God’s deep, unbreakable love for all people. And to help them tell everyone from everywhere in the world, God empowers them to become multilingual right then and there, in the middle of a massive crowd of international travelers. Again, Isaiah spoke for Yahweh when he wrote about this kind of mission beforehand. “I will also make you a light of the nations, so that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth” ([Isa. 49:6](#) [Isaiah 49:6](#)). This is the moment when God’s divine fire identified the new temple, the new place where Heaven and Earth overlap, which is the Church community made of Jesus’ people. Not a mountain, not a beautiful building or a sacred place or space—God’s temple is made with unexpected men and women. God’s dwelling place is in people who bear witness to the risen Jesus by choosing to live in his way of love. And the whole world is eventually going to meet God through this community of people who love God and others like Jesus does.

# Pentecost Events

Timeline of Acts 2



The disciples gather in one place

A sound like a violent wind from heaven fills the house

Tongues of fire rest on each of them

They are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in other tongues



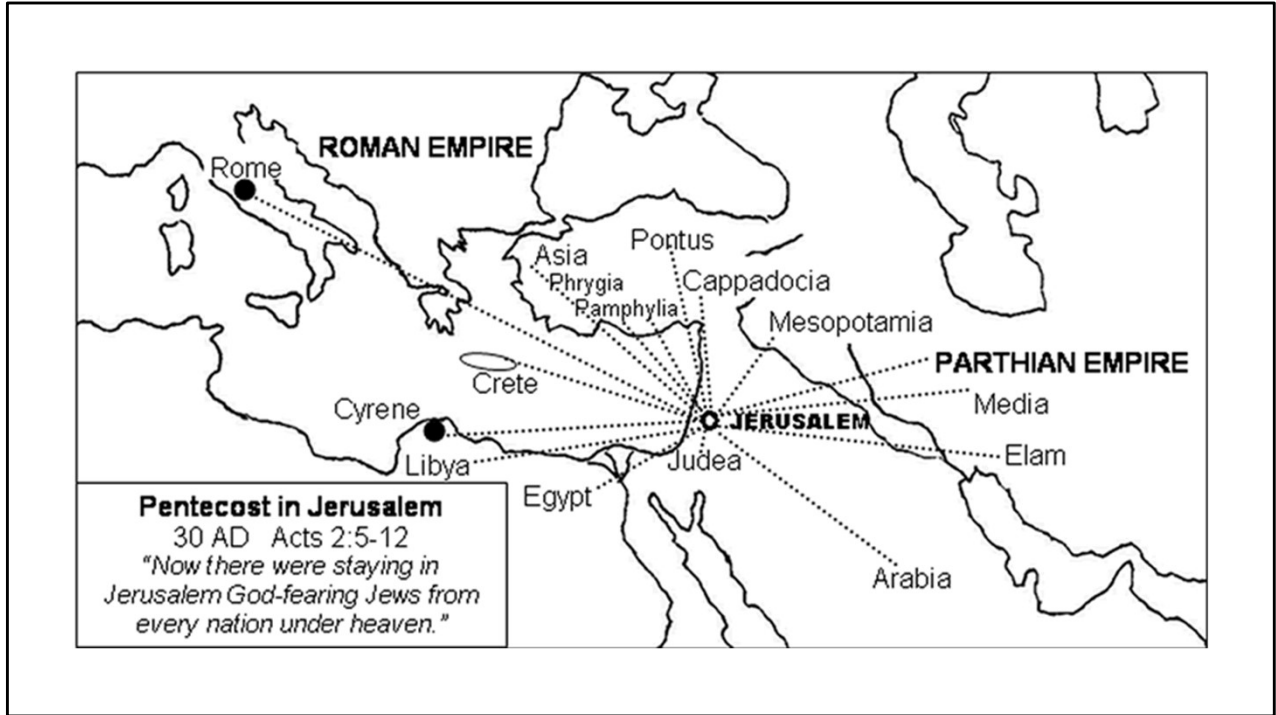
Bystanders hear believers praising God in their native language

Peter preaches to the crowd

3,000 become believers and are baptized

All believers are unified and share their possessions





## The Apostolic Church

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuwkmesVUqI>



Any comments/questions/discussion?



## **Readings for Sept 23**

### **The Growth of the Church**

Acts 6:1-15:35

Galatians 1:1-6:18

James 1:1-5:20

## Closing Hymn

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJUX733ovGI>





# Jesus Christ, Our Savior

MT 26-28; MK 14-16; LK 22-24; JN 18-21; AC 1-5

10 – 16 SEP 2024

Within just a few days of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Jesus will face death. The Jewish leaders plot to kill him, but only Roman courts had the authority to impose a death sentence. Charges of political crimes were made and, while Pilate saw through the subterfuge, he finally gave in and had Jesus crucified. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus’ death on the cross was always an essential element in God’s plan. The crucifixion was prophesied in the Old Testament and Jesus informed his disciples beforehand of what would happen. The gospels give a detailed account of the last days, as well as accounts of his resurrection. His resurrection can be seen as God’s powerful and ultimate declaration that Jesus truly was and is the Son of God. The first key to understanding Acts and the New Testament is that when Jesus returned to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to provide power for Christian living and Christian witness. The book of Acts is the story of the works of the Holy Spirit in and through believers in Jesus.

## Weekly Reading Plan (pp. 1240-1271)

Day 1: MT 26:57-75; MK 14:53-72;  
LK 22:54-71; JN 18:12-27

Day 2: MT 27:1-26; MK 15:1-15; LK 23:1-25;  
JN 18:28-40

Day 3: MT 27:27-31; MK 15:16-20; JN 19:1-16;  
MT 27:32-56; MK 15:21-41;  
LK 23:26-49; JN 19:17-37

Day 4: MT 27:57-66; MK 15:42-47; LK 23:50-  
56; JN 19:38-42; MT 28:1-8; MK 16:1-8;  
LK 24:1—12; JN 20:1-13; MT 28:9-15;  
MK 16:9-11; JN 20:14-18

Day 5: MK 16:12, 13; LK 24:13-49; JN 20:19-31;  
MT 28:16-20; MK 16:14-18; JN 21:1-25;  
MK 16:19, 20; LK 24:50-53

Day 6: AC 1:1-2:47

Day 7: AC 3:1-5:42

## Outline

Jesus’ Trial Before the Sanhedrin (Day 1)  
Friday : Before Pilate the Governor (Day 2)  
Sentenced to Crucifixion (Day 3)  
Crucifixion at Golgotha (Day 3)  
Burial of Jesus (Day 4)  
Sunday: Morning at the Tomb (Day 4)  
Early Resurrection Appearances (Day 4)  
Appearances in Judea (Day 5)  
Later Appearances in Galilee (Day 5)  
Jesus Ascends from Mount of Olives (Day 5)  
The Ascension (Day 6)  
Pentecost (Day 6)  
The Early Christians in Jerusalem (Day 7)

## Key Characters

Jesus	Caiaphas
The Apostles	Sanhedrin
High Priests	Guards
Annas	Pilate
Pilate’s wife	Barabbas
Soldiers	Simon
Mary Magdalene	Mary
Centurion	Joseph
Nicodemus	Cleopas
Disciples	Justus
Mattias	Ananias
Sapphira	Gamaliel

## Key Locations

Jerusalem  
Golgotha  
Galilee  
Bethany  
Road to Emmaus  
Mount of Olives

## Key Terms

Messiah  
Denial  
Crucifixion  
Holy Spirit  
Ascension  
Fellowship  
Baptism  
Discipleship  
Evangelism  
Persecution

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## Key Verse

Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times. [MT 26:75]

They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me. [MT 27:9-10]

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children." [MT 27:23-26]

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." [JN 18:36]

We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. [JN 19:15]

"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") [MT 27:46]

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." [LK 23:33]

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." [LK 23:46]

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples." [MT 28:5-7]

"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." [LK 24:38-39]

"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." [JN 20:29]

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. [JN 20:30-31]

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age." [MT 28:19-20]

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with "the Holy Spirit." [ACTS 1:4-5]

It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. [ACTS 1:7]

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## Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Mt26: Jesus took Passover with his disciples. He prayed in agony in Gethsemane. Judas betrayed Jesus to the chief priests. Peter denied him.

Mk14: Jesus took Passover with his disciples. He prayed in agony in Gethsemane. Judas betrayed him to the chief priests. Peter denied him.

Lk22: Jesus took Passover with the disciples. He prayed at the Mount of Olives. Judas betrayed him to the chief priests. Peter denied him.

Jn18: Judas betrayed Jesus to the chief priests. Peter denied him. He was sent before Pilate. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

Mt27: Jesus was handed over to Pilate. The crowd said, "Crucify him!" He was mocked and crucified. Darkness fell and he gave up his spirit.

Mk15: Jesus was handed over to Pilate. The crowd cried, "Crucify him!" He was mocked and crucified. Darkness fell and he breathed his last.

Lk23: Jesus was taken to Pilate. The crowd said, "Crucify him!" He was crucified with two criminals. Darkness fell and he breathed his last.

Jn19: The soldiers took Jesus and crucified him. He said, "It is finished." He gave up his spirit. A soldier pierced his side with a spear.

Mt28: The women went to the tomb. An angel said, "He has risen!" Jesus met them. He came to the eleven and said, "Go and make disciples."

Mk16: The women went to the tomb. A man in white said, "He has risen!" Jesus appeared to the disciples. He said, "Go and preach the gospel."

Lk24: The women found the tomb empty. Jesus met two on the road to Emmaus. He appeared to the disciples and opened the Scriptures to them.

Jn20: Mary went to the tomb and found it empty. Jesus met her. He came and stood among the disciples. Thomas said, "My Lord and my God!"

Jn21: Jesus appeared as the disciples were fishing. He said to Peter, "Do you love me? Feed my sheep." The beloved disciple has testified.

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## Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Acts1: Jesus said, "You will receive the Spirit and be my witnesses." He was taken up in a cloud. The believers cast lots to replace Judas.

Acts2: At Pentecost they were filled with the Spirit. Peter told the crowd, "You crucified Jesus but God has made him Lord." 3,000 believed.

Acts3: Peter and John healed a lame man at the temple. Peter told the people, "Faith in Jesus has healed this man. Repent of your sins."

Acts4: They were taken before the rulers. Peter and John said, "We cannot stop speaking about Jesus." The believers prayed for boldness.

Acts5: Ananias and Sapphira told a lie and fell dead. An angel released the apostles from prison. Gamaliel advised, "Leave these men alone."

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## What did I learn about God?

- If Jesus came today, who would “crucify” him? What would be the charges against him? Where would you be?
- How do you explain the necessity of Jesus’ death to a nonbeliever? Is Jesus’ death for you more a dispassionate fact or an emotional experience? Why?
- Why did God pour out the gift of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Jesus? How would you describe your experience with the Holy Spirit? When are you most aware of the Holy Spirit?
- Why do you think God’s punishment of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) so severe? Are you ever tempted to “hold back” from God?
- The disciples were persecuted for following Jesus. How do you explain why God sometimes delivers you out of hardships, but at other times he allows you to go through them?

## What did I learn about human nature?

- Why did Peter deny he knew Jesus? What must Peter have felt like after he denied Jesus, just as Jesus predicted? How do people typically react when they experience failure? What are some effective ways to deal with failure?
- When Jesus stands before Pilate, is Pilate more concerned during the trial about whether Jesus is the Messiah? Hearing out Jesus? Exchanging prisoners? Doing justice? Appeasement? How concerned was Pilate that Jesus was innocent? Is Pilate more concerned about the crowd? His wife? His conscience? Why?
- Why did the chief priests and elders want to spread the rumor that Jesus’ disciples came and stole his body?
- What made the early church so appealing to others? If you had been invited to be part of this community, what would have been your reaction?
- What does Peter’s use of the OT (Acts 3:11-26) say about its benefits to faith in Christ?

## What did I learn about my life/relationship with God?

- Review what Jesus tells the high priests when before the Sanhedrin (MT 26:57-68). Why do you think that Jesus, for the most part, remains silent? How do you know when to keep silent and when to talk about your faith?
- As you read the passages on the conviction, torture and mocking of Jesus leading to his death, we must be careful not to look on at a distance at those mentioned in the story. How are we ever like the people who played a part in Jesus’ crucifixion? Are we at times like the chief priests and scribes? Pilate? The soldiers? Simon of Cyrene? The Two bandits? Are there ways in which we have mocked, contributed to suffering or been a mere bystander in the way of Jesus and in our relationship with those whom Christ loves and comes to save?
- In Acts 1:8, Jesus says “you will be my witnesses.” Where do you feel called to be Christ’s witness?
- How have you made Jesus king in your life? How have you tried to guard against God “breaking through “ in your life? Why?
- How do you think you would feel if you were sent to jail for what you believe? How would your family feel? What would this do for your faith?