

## **It's Monday of Holy Week**

Yesterday Jesus entered Jerusalem accompanied by palm waving friends  
**Luke 19 verse 28**

Today after spending last night at Bethany---just outside Jerusalem-----he returned to Jerusalem.

Along the way he curses a fig tree-----this puzzles his disciples.

He enters the temple and creates havoc there----turning over the tables of the money changers and the merchants selling sacrificial pigeons.

He would not allow anyone to even carry anything through the temple, insisting that the temple be a place devoted to prayer.

The large crowd which had gathered there is described as spellbound by his teaching.  
Temple authorities are described as frightened  
**Mark 11 verse 12**

## **It's Tuesday of Holy Week**

After spending the night again at Bethany Jesus and his disciples re-entered Jerusalem today. The fig tree that Jesus had cursed yesterday has now withered.

### **Mark 11 verse 20**

When asked about this Jesus offers a few sayings related to faith.

His meaning here is not exactly clear.

Some have suggested that the fig tree might represent the fate of the temple in Jerusalem which was indeed sacked by Roman forces in 70AD

### **Mark 13 verse 28**

The entire day is spent in the temple. Jesus offers some very provocative teaching and a parable or two which put temple officials on the defensive. They attempt to argue with him and trick him with questions but to no avail.

They grow increasingly violent in their responses to him.

### **Mark 12 verse 12**

Today is the day that the poor widow leaves a penny in the temple offering and Jesus praises her for her generosity.

### **Mark 12 verse 42**

Jesus and his friends return to Bethany in the evening and as they look out over the city Jesus offers words of encouragement and warning to his disciples.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, my words will never pass away...Keep awake then, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming. Evening or midnight, cock-crow or early dawn, if he comes suddenly he must not find you asleep.

What I say to you I say to everyone: Keep awake.”

### **Mark 13 verses 5-37**

## It's Wednesday of Holy Week

Today is the day that Judas decides to assist the chief priests and the temple police in arranging for Jesus to be arrested. This is one of the deepest mysteries of history. What was Judas thinking?

**Matthew 26 verse 14**

Back in Bethany---just outside Jerusalem---Jesus and his disciples and friends are relaxing---its the day before Passover---the primary Jewish holiday which recalls the spectacular liberation of the Hebrews from Egypt. They are lead by Moses though the Red Sea---remember the story? **Exodus 14 verses 1-31**

Jerusalem is teeming with pilgrims who have come to the Holy City for Passover. There is both celebration and tension in the air. Roman guards are everywhere. This commemoration of Jewish liberation is taking place in the shadow of a foreign power. Many Passover celebrants are praying to God for another liberation.

At Bethany a woman approaches Jesus with some costly perfume and empties it over his head in an act of devotion and adoration. The Disciples see it as wasteful but Jesus sees it as a precious gift---something that will never be forgotten.

**Matthew 26 verse 6**

## **It's Thursday of Holy Week**

This morning Jesus' disciples Peter and John ask him where he would like to celebrate the Passover supper. Jesus gives them directions to go into the city---there they will be met by a man carrying a jar of water. They are to follow him to a house and inquire about a room for Passover. Jesus says that the householder will show them an upper room all set up for the meal. All this indeed unfolds as Jesus had said.

**Luke 22 verse 7**

In the evening as they are gathering for the meal together—Jesus rises from the table and takes a towel and a basin to wash his disciples' feet. When he comes to Peter—Peter resists---but Jesus insists. When he finishes Jesus tells them that he has set them an example of humble service---this is the way he wants his disciples to treat one another.

**John 13 verse 3**

As the meal gets underway Jesus announces that one of his disciples will betray him. They are taken aback and ask---Is it me???

This is the moment depicted in the famous Da Vinci portrait of the Last Supper

**Matthew 26 verse 20**

Jesus says that the one to whom he gives a piece of bread dipped in a dish---that one is the betrayer. He gives the piece of bread to Judas and tells him to do quickly what he has to do. Judas leaves the supper and as John tells the story he concludes with these cryptic words---it was night.

**John 13 verse 30**

Jesus uses this time with his disciples to really pour out his heart

Some of his most beloved words are spoken here:

Set your troubled hearts at rest

I am the vine you are the branches

This is my commandment—love one another as I have loved you.

You did not choose me---I chose you

In the world you have trouble but take courage---I have overcome the world

**John 14 15 16 17**

After supper and some singing Jesus and his disciples return to the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem. On the way Jesus tells them that they all will fall away. Peter says he will never fall away. Jesus tells him that before the cock crows he will disown Jesus three times.

Peter again insists on his loyalty and all the other disciples do too.

**Matthew 26 verse 30**

They come to a place called Gethsemane-----the famous garden of Gethsemane  
Jesus asks his disciples to stay awake with him and he goes off a distance for some solitude  
He throws himself on the ground and prays----Abba Father all things are possible for you----  
take this cup away from me----yet not what I will but your will be done.

**Mark 14 verse 32**

Judas arrives with an escort of the temple guard.  
He approaches Jesus and kisses him as a sign of the one they are to arrest.  
There is a scuffle and some commotion. A bystander wearing nothing but a linen cloth loses  
his garment in the scuffle and runs away naked.

**Mark 14 verse 43**

Jesus is taken to the house of the High Priest.  
Peter follows at a distance  
The Council has gathered and many accusations are made  
Jesus remains silent until he is asked if he is the Messiah---the Son of the Blessed One  
He responds---I am.

**Mark 14 verse 53**

Remember when Moses at the burning bush asks for God's name?  
God tells him----I Am.

**Exodus 3 verse 13**

This claim of Jesus throws his accusers into a rage  
This begins a series of beatings and mistreatment that continues into the  
night and early morning.

**Matthew 26 verse 67**

While this is happening Peter is outside in the courtyard  
He is approached three times by bystanders who claim they had seen him with Jesus.  
Peter vehemently denies all three claims.  
After the third denial a cock crows.

**Matthew 26 verse 75**

The wife of Pilate—the Roman Governor----has a dream about Jesus.  
Tomorrow she will warn Pilate—have nothing to do with that innocent man.

**Matthew 27 verse 19**

## It's Friday of Holy Week

As the sun rises on Good Friday Jesus is in chains.

The temple officials take him to the Roman Governor---Pilate

Roman officials are the only ones with the power to order a death sentence.

The temple authorities are accusing Jesus of blasphemy--a capital offense---but they need Pilate to authorize it.

**Matthew 27 verse 1**

The Gospel writers offer various accounts of the encounter between Jesus and Pilate.

John provides the most detail and also the softest portrayal of Pilate

Pilate is generally presented as a conflicted figure---not wanting to condemn a man in whom he finds no fault.

**John 19 verse 8**

Recently discovered records offer a glimpse of Pilate---in contrast to John's Gospel---as a ruthless overseer of his territory who casually ordered crucifixions on a regular basis. The truth may be found in the middle somewhere. Current scholarship suggests that Jesus---while an opponent of the temple officials---was also seen as a political threat by Pilate who had very little tolerance for political threats. Pilate is now seen as the primary actor in these events. In recent years both Catholic and Protestant groups have officially expressed regret that for many centuries the Jews were collectively and unnecessarily portrayed in Christian teaching as those primarily responsible for the crucifixion.

Luke tells us that Pilate tried to pass Jesus off to Herod---who ruled over Galilee

**Luke 23 verse 6**

What we DO know is that Jesus was subjected to constant torment/humiliation/flogging during these morning hours.

Pilate---with varying degrees of hesitation as reported in the Gospels---finally assents to the crucifixion. Jesus is then subject to what seems to be unusually cruel treatment by Roman soldiers.

**Matthew 27 verse 27**

Perhaps this is because they had heard that Jesus claimed to be a king.

The crown of thorns and the cynical sign nailed to the cross are a clear message to anyone who would challenge the worldview of Rome.

**Matthew 27 verse 37**

Meanwhile Judas has realized that something has gone horribly wrong with his arrangement to have Jesus arrested

**Matthew 27 verse 3**

We have no information as to the whereabouts of the other 11 disciples on Friday except John---see below.

Jesus is led to Golgotha---the place of the skull.

He is stripped and fastened to a cross with nails.

A crowd---we are not sure how big---gathers to hurl abuse

**Matthew 27 verse 39**

Two thieves are crucified along with Jesus---to one who seeks forgiveness he says---today you will be with me in paradise.

**Luke 23 verse 43**

These words to the thief are among Jesus' "last seven words."

The other six are variously recorded in the Gospels and are as follows

Father forgive them, they know not what they do

Woman behold thy son

My God my God why have you forsaken me?

I thirst

It is finished/It is accomplished

Into Thy hands I commend my spirit

About midday a darkness falls over the whole land.

The sun's light fails

Jesus gives a loud cry and dies at about 3 in the afternoon.

A Roman centurion is deeply moved---this man was innocent---he says

**Luke 23 verse 47**

His mother Mary and Mary of Magdala and the disciple John and another woman named Mary stood close by keeping vigil to the end.

**John 19 verse 25**

Two well placed friends of Jesus—Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus-----seek and receive Pilate's permission to remove Jesus from the cross prior to sunset---which is the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath---Saturday. We know from records of the time that crucified corpses were typically left on their crosses as cynical cruel reminders of Roman power. So this quick burial is unusual---perhaps an attempt by Pilate to soothe his conscience?

**John 19 verse 38**

Jesus is wrapped in linen with some spices by Joseph and laid in a tomb newly hewn from rock. Some of the women followed along to assist with the burial and went home to prepare more spices with plans to return to the tomb on Sunday. But now it was sunset---the Sabbath----and they went home to rest in obedience to the ancient commandment to rest on the seventh day.

**Luke 23 verse 53**

### **It's Saturday of Holy Week**

Temple officials----remembering that Jesus claimed he would be raised on the third day----go to Pilate on Saturday morning to ask that the gravesite be secured.

They suspect that Jesus' disciples might steal the body and claim he was risen.

Pilate agrees

**Matthew 27 verse 61**

Jesus descends into Hades

**1 Peter 3 verse 19**

**1 Peter 4 verse 6**

### **He is Risen**

The Gospel writers report the resurrection with a variety of detail

#### **Matthew**

Two women go early to the tomb

There is an earthquake

An angel descends----frightens the guards who have been posted there---and rolls away the stone and sits on it

He announces to the women that Jesus is not here.

He tells them to tell his disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee

On their way to where the disciples are Jesus meets them.

The disciples make their way to Galilee and are met there by Jesus who tells them----I am with you to the end of the age.

## **Mark**

Two women go to the tomb---wondering how to move the stone away.  
When they arrive the stone has already been moved.  
They go inside and find a young man dressed in white.  
He tells them Jesus has been raised and that they are to go and tell the disciples  
But they are so afraid they say nothing to anyone.

Most scholars agree that Mark is the earliest to write down a Gospel---authorship has been determined to be about 60AD. Matthew and Luke use much of Mark's material as they write down their Gospels at roughly 80AD---they each add additional material--- especially accounts of the resurrection. Curiously, many of the earliest copies of Mark that we have end with the women running away and not talking to anyone.---

### **Chapter 16 verse 8.**

They never see the risen Jesus. Did Mark write resurrection material that was lost? Or is this how he chose to end his Gospel-----with a rather dramatic exit of the women? No one knows for sure. Other early copies of Mark have some brief additions---10 verses or so--- which scholars have determined were added later. Your Bible might have footnotes to this effect.

## **Luke**

Several women go to the tomb---find it empty and go inside.  
While they are puzzling all this out---two men in dazzling clothes appear.  
They ask the question---Why do you look for the living among the dead?  
They return to the eleven disciples but the disciples do not believe the women  
This is too bad, but let's not be too hard on the disciples here---there is some scholarly debate about this, but some scholars maintain that women were not considered credible witnesses in those days. Interesting that Jesus chooses women as his witnesses anyway eh?

Later in the day two of the disciples---one of them named Cleopas-----meet the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus---about 7 miles from Jerusalem. Cleopas is not one of the 11 but sometimes those who were part of a larger circle of friends accompanying Jesus in his ministry are called disciples. The travelers do not recognize Jesus at first as he walks with them-----but when they invite him to have supper with them---their eyes are opened as Jesus breaks the bread. Jesus then vanishes.

They rush back to Jerusalem to tell the 11 Disciples only to discover Peter has also seen Jesus. Into this gathering Jesus comes---shows them his feet and hands---and eats a piece of fish to demonstrate he is not a ghost He leads them outside the city to Bethany---blesses them--- tells them to stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes. Jesus then ascends.

You may be interested to know that the author of Luke is also the author of Acts.  
If you look at the beginning verses of each book you can see that they are two pieces of a whole composition.

## John

One woman goes to the tomb. She finds it empty and rushes to tell the disciples.

Two disciples and the woman come back to the tomb.

The disciples go in to discover burial linens scattered about---then they go back to their hiding place. The woman stays and weeps. She is met by two angels who are very compassionate. Then she turns and sees a stranger. She supposes him to be the cemetery caretaker. She asks about the missing Jesus then realizes she is talking with the risen Jesus. She runs back to tell the disciples. Later that night Jesus appears in the locked room where the disciples are hiding.

He breathes on them-----giving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

One of the 11 disciples is missing from this meeting---Thomas.

When he returns later he refuses to believe Jesus had been there alive----this is the famous "Doubting Thomas." A week later----Jesus again appears to the disciples---this time Thomas is there---and he does not doubt anymore. Some time later some of the disciples are out all night fishing----don't catch a thing. A stranger calls to them from shore-----with some advice as to where they should drop their nets. When they catch so many fish they cannot haul them into the boat----they realize the stranger on the shore is Jesus. When they get to shore they enjoy a tasty breakfast Jesus has prepared over a fire---fish and bread.

With thanks to Terry OHara who had the original inspired idea for this Holy Week daily review

With you in Christ

Rob

