



The Story of Easter

As told in the Bible



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Holy Week

As told in the Bible

(Probably 29 March – 5 April 33AD)

Palm Sunday - Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem

Luke 19:28-40: ²⁸ Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his disciples. ²⁹ As he came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead. ³⁰ “Go into that village over there,” he told them. “As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks, ‘Why are you untying that colt?’ just say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

³² So they went and found the colt, just as Jesus had said. ³³ And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, “Why are you untying that colt?”

³⁴ And the disciples simply replied, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵ So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on.

³⁶ As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. ³⁷ When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.

³⁸ “Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the LORD!
Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!”

³⁹ But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, “Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!”

⁴⁰ He replied, “If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!”

The Old Testament says:

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

Zechariah 9:9 NIV

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.*

Psalm 118:26 NIV

Monday

Jesus Clears the Temple

Mark 11: ¹⁵ When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace. ¹⁷ He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, '*My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,*' but you have turned it into a den of thieves."

¹⁸ When the leading priests and teachers of religious law heard what Jesus had done, they began planning how to kill him. But they were afraid of him because the people were so amazed at his teaching.

¹⁹ That evening Jesus and the disciples left the city.

The Old Testament says:

*Passion for your house has consumed me,
and the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.
Psalm 69:9*

*Has this house, which is called by my name,
become a den of robbers in your eyes?
Behold, I myself have seen it, says the Lord.
Jeremiah 7:11 RSV*

Tuesday

Luke 21: ³⁷ Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives*, ³⁸ and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.

*The villages of Bethany and Bethphage were here.

Holy week was Jesus' last opportunity to teach the crowds and he packed a lot in. The gospels record a lot of teaching at this point.

Wednesday

The Plot to Kill Jesus

Matthew 26: ¹ When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² "As you know, Passover begins in two days, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

³ At that same time the leading priests and elders were meeting at the residence of Caiaphas, the high priest, ⁴ plotting how to capture Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵ "But not during the Passover celebration," they agreed, "or the people may riot."

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

Matthew 26: ⁶ Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. ⁷ While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume and poured it over his head.

⁸ The disciples were indignant when they saw this. "What a waste!" they said. ⁹ "It could have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor."

¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, replied, "Why criticize this woman for doing such a good thing to me? ¹¹ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. ¹² She has poured this perfume on me to prepare my body for burial. ¹³ I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

Luke 22: The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is also called Passover, was approaching. ² The leading priests and teachers of religious law were plotting how to kill Jesus, but they were afraid of the people's reaction.

³ Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples, ⁴ and he went to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. ⁵ They were delighted, and they promised to give him money.* ⁶ So he agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him when the crowds weren't around. *Matthew 26:¹⁵ And they gave him thirty pieces of silver.

Maunder Thursday

Thursday Morning - Preparing a room

Luke 22⁷ Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."

⁹ "Where do you want us to prepare it?" they asked him.

¹⁰ He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, ¹¹ say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' ¹² He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." ¹³ They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.

Mark 14:17 In the evening Jesus arrived with the 12 disciples.

Thursday Evening - The Passover/Last Supper

From about 6 p.m. onwards. They were remembering the Passover 24 hours early.

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

John 13:1 Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. ² It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

⁸ "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

⁹ Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

¹⁰ Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? ¹³ You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. ¹⁴ And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ I tell you the

truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

The 'Last Supper'

Luke 22: ¹⁴ When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. ¹⁵ Jesus said, "I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. ¹⁶ For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

Matthew 26:²⁶ As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take this and eat it, for this is my body."

²⁷ And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, "Each of you drink from it, ²⁸ for this is my blood, which confirms the *new* covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many.

Luke 22: ²¹ "But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. ²² For it has been determined that the Son of Man must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him." ²³ The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.

²⁴ Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them.

²⁵ Jesus told them, "In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.' ²⁶ But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. ²⁷ Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.

²⁸ "You have stayed with me in my time of trial. ²⁹ And just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right ³⁰ to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

John 13: ¹⁸ "I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.' ¹⁹ I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah. ²⁰ I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."

²¹ Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"

²² The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. ²³ The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, "Who's he talking about?" ²⁵ So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"

²⁶ Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do." ²⁸ None of the

others at the table knew what Jesus meant.²⁹ Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor.³⁰ So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

Judas left perhaps around 8.00 – 9.00 pm. Caiaphas then called an emergency meeting of the Sanhedrin to organise an impromptu trial. He needed at least 23 members out of this council of 71 who were available and prepared to bend the rules.

John 13:³¹ As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, “The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him.³² And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will soon give glory to the Son.³³ Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going.³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

The gospel of John records more conversation and teaching during the evening.

Matthew 26:30-35³⁰ Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Maybe around 10 p.m. – 10.30 p.m.

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

Matthew 26³¹ On the way, Jesus told them, “Tonight all of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say,

‘God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ Zechariah 13:7

³² But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.”

³³ Peter declared, “Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you.”

³⁴ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me.”

³⁵ “No!” Peter insisted. “Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!” And all the other disciples vowed the same.

Luke 22:³¹ “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat.³² But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

Maybe around 10.30 pm onwards

Matthew 26: ³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, “Sit here while I go over there to pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. ³⁸ He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

Luke 22: ⁴¹ He walked away, about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² “Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” ⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.

Matthew 26 ⁴⁰ Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, “Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? ⁴¹ Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!”

⁴² Then Jesus left them a second time and prayed, “My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³ When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn’t keep their eyes open.

⁴⁴ So he went to pray a third time, saying the same things again.

⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said, “Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But look—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Up, let’s be going. Look, my betrayer is here!”

The Arrest

Perhaps around 11.30 - midnight - Jesus was arrested

John 18:³ The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

⁴ Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. “Who are you looking for?” he asked.

⁵ “Jesus the Nazarene,” they replied.

“I AM he,” Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) ⁶ As Jesus said “I AM he,” they all drew back and fell to the ground! ⁷ Once more he asked them, “Who are you looking for?”

And again they replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

⁸ “I told you that I AM he,” Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.” ⁹ He did this to fulfil his own statement: “I did not lose a single one of those you have given me.”

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. ¹¹ But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"

Matthew 26 ⁵² "Those who use the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? ⁵⁴ But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?"

Luke 22: ⁵¹ And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

Luke 22 ⁵² Then Jesus spoke to the leading priests, the captains of the Temple guard, and the elders who had come for him. "Am I some dangerous revolutionary," he asked, "that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? ⁵³ Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there teaching every day. But this is your moment, the time when the power of darkness reigns."

Matthew 26 ⁵⁶ At that point, all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Jesus at the High Priest's House

12.30 am or so, the arrest party arrived at Caiaphas' house

Luke 22 and John 18

John 18:¹² So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. ¹³ First they took him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."

John 18:¹² So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. Luke 22 ⁵⁴ and led him to the high priest's home.

Peter's First Denial

John 18:¹⁵ Simon Peter followed Jesus at a distance, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple (*John*) was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. ¹⁶ Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. ¹⁷ The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

"No," he said, "I am not."

The High Priest Questions Jesus

John 18:¹⁹ Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. ²⁰ Jesus replied, "Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. ²¹ Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said."

²² Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded.

²³ Jesus replied, “If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I’m speaking the truth, why are you beating me?”

²⁴ Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Peter’s Second and Third Denials

Luke 22 and John 18

¹⁸ Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

⁵⁶ A servant girl noticed him in the firelight and began staring at him. Finally she said, “This man was one of Jesus’ followers!”

⁵⁷ But Peter denied it. “Woman,” he said, “I don’t even know him!”

John 18:²⁶ But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?”

⁵⁹ He insisted, “This must be one of them, because he is a Galilean, too.”

⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

⁶¹ At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, the Lord’s words flashed through Peter’s mind: “Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.” ⁶² And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly.

Trial by the Sanhedrin (the Jewish High Council)

Around 12.30 – 2.30am

Mark 14: ⁵³ They took Jesus to the high priest’s home where the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered.

⁵⁵ Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But they couldn’t find any. ⁵⁶ Many false witnesses spoke against him, but they contradicted each other. ⁵⁷ Finally, some men stood up and gave this false testimony: ⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this Temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, made without human hands.’” ⁵⁹ But even then they didn’t get their stories straight!

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus, “Well, aren’t you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?” ⁶¹ But Jesus was silent and made no reply. Then the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

⁶² Jesus said, “I AM. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, “Why do we need other witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?”

“Guilty!” they all cried. “He deserves to die!”

⁶³ The guards in charge of Jesus began mocking and beating him. Some of them began to spit at him.. ⁶⁴ They blindfolded him and said, “Prophecy to us! Who hit you that time?” ⁶⁵ And they hurled all sorts of terrible insults at him.

John 18:²⁸ Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning.

Jesus’ Trial before Pilate

About 6.00 am Jesus was taken to Pilate for trial

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 18

Matthew 27:¹ Very early in the morning the leading priests and the elders met again to discuss how to persuade the Roman governor to sentence Jesus to death.

Luke 23:¹ Then the entire council took Jesus over to Pilate, the Roman governor.

John 18:²⁸ His accusers didn’t go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn’t be allowed to celebrate the Passover.

²⁹ So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, “What is your charge against this man?”

²³ ² They began to state their case: “This man has been leading our people astray by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is the Messiah, a king.”

¹² But when the leading priests and the elders made their accusations against him, Jesus remained silent. ¹³ “Don’t you hear all these charges they are bringing against you?” Pilate demanded. ¹⁴ But Jesus made no response to any of the charges, much to the governor’s surprise.

³⁰ “We wouldn’t have handed him over to you if he weren’t a criminal!” they retorted.

³¹ “Then take him away and judge him by your own law,” Pilate told them.

“Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone,” the Jewish leaders replied. ³² (This fulfilled Jesus’ prediction about the way he would die.)

John 18:³³ Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. “Are you the king of the Jews?” he asked him.

³⁴ Jesus replied, “Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?”

³⁵ “Am I a Jew?” Pilate retorted. “Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?”

³⁶ Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.”

³⁷ Pilate said, “So you are a king?”

Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”

³⁸ “What is truth?” Pilate asked.

Luke 23:⁴ Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

⁵ Then they became insistent. “But he is causing riots by his teaching wherever he goes—all over Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem!”

⁶ “Oh, is he a Galilean?” Pilate asked. ⁷ When they said that he was, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under Herod’s jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the time.

Jesus sent to Herod Antipas

About 7.00 a.m.

Luke 23:⁸ Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. ⁹ He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer. ¹⁰ Meanwhile, the leading priests and the teachers of religious law stood there shouting their accusations. ¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. ¹² (Herod and Pilate, who had been enemies before, became friends that day.)

Jesus before Pilate again

About 8.00 a.m. Luke 23 and Matthew 27

Luke 23:¹³ Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, ¹⁴ and he announced his verdict. “You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. ¹⁵ Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. ¹⁶ So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him.”

Then he went out again to the people and told them, “He is not guilty of any crime.

“He is not guilty of any crime.³⁹ But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this ‘King of the Jews’?”

Matthew 27:¹⁵ Now it was the governor’s custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd—anyone they wanted. ¹⁶ This year there was a notorious prisoner, a man named Barabbas. ¹⁹ (Barabbas was in prison for taking part in an insurrection in Jerusalem against the government, and for murder.) ¹⁷ As the crowds gathered before Pilate’s house that morning, he asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” ¹⁸ (He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.)

¹⁹ Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: “Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night.”

²⁰ Meanwhile, the leading priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be put to death. ²¹ So the governor asked again, “Which of these two do you want me to release to you?”

The crowd shouted back, “Barabbas!”

²² Pilate responded, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?”

They shouted back, “Crucify him!”

²³ “Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?”

But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!”

Luke 23:²² For the third time he demanded, “Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him.”

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

Matthew 27, John 19

John 19 Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. Matthew 27:²⁷ Some of the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into their headquarters and called out the entire regiment.

²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. ²⁹ They wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head, and they placed a reed stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery and taunted, “Hail! King of the Jews!” ³⁰ And they spit on him and grabbed the stick and struck him on the head with it.

Jesus Sentenced to Death by Pilate

Matthew 27, John 19

⁴ Pilate went outside again and said to the people, “I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty.” ⁵ Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, “Look, here is the man!”

⁶ When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

“Take him yourselves and crucify him,” Pilate said. “I find him not guilty.”

⁷ The Jewish leaders replied, “By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God.”

⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. ⁹ He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer. ¹⁰ “Why don’t you talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?”

¹¹ Then Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

John 19 ¹² Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, “If you release this man, you are no ‘friend of Caesar.’ Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar.”

¹³ When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). ¹⁴ It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, “Look, here is your king!”

¹⁵ “Away with him,” they yelled. “Away with him! Crucify him!”

“What? Crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the leading priests shouted back.

Matthew 27:²³ But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!”

²⁴ Pilate saw that he wasn’t getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. The responsibility is yours!”

²⁵ And all the people yelled back, “We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!”

²⁶ So Pilate released Barabbas to them. ¹⁶ Then Pilate turned Jesus over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified. Matthew 27 ³¹ When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

Judas Hangs Himself

Matthew 27: ³ When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. ⁴ “I have sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.”

“What do we care?” they retorted. “That’s your problem.”

⁵ Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went out and hanged himself.

⁶ The leading priests picked up the coins. “It wouldn’t be right to put this money in the Temple treasury,” they said, “since it was payment for murder.” ⁷ After some discussion they finally decided to buy the potter’s field, and they made it into a cemetery for foreigners. ⁸ That is why the field is still called the Field of Blood.

⁹ This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah that says,

“They took the thirty pieces of silver—
the price at which he was valued by the people of Israel,
¹⁰ and purchased the potter’s field,
as the LORD directed”

Good Friday

The Crucifixion

About 9 a.m. Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19

Luke 23:²⁶ As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ A large crowd trailed behind, including many grief-stricken women. ²⁸ But Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the days are coming when they will say, ‘Fortunate indeed are the women who are childless, the wombs that have not borne a child and the breasts that have never nursed.’ ³⁰ People will beg the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and plead with the hills, ‘Bury us.’ ³¹ For if these things are done when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

³³ And they went out to a place called Golgotha (which means “Place of the Skull”). ³⁴ The soldiers gave Jesus wine drugged with myrrh, but when he had tasted it, he refused to drink it.

²⁴ Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross. ²⁵ It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him.

³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”

³² Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.

¹⁹ And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, “Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.” ²⁰ The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

²¹ Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, “Change it from ‘The King of the Jews’ to ‘He said, I am King of the Jews.’”

²² Pilate replied, “No, what I have written, I have written.”

²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴ So they said, “Rather than tearing it apart, let’s throw dice for it.” This fulfilled the Scripture that says, “They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing.” So that is what they did.

³⁹ The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. ⁴⁰ “Look at you now!” they yelled at him. “You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, if you are the Son of God, save yourself and come down from the cross!”

⁴¹ The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. ⁴² “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but he can’t save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? ³² Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!”

⁴³ He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

³⁹ One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”

⁴⁰ But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die?” ⁴¹ We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

⁴³ And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

²⁵ Standing near the cross were Jesus’ mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, “Dear woman, here is your son.” ²⁷ And he said to this disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19

Matthew 27: ⁴⁵ At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock.

⁴⁶ At about three o’clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” which means “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

⁴⁷ Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. ⁴⁸ One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink. ⁴⁹ But the rest said, “Wait! Let’s see whether Elijah comes to save him.”

John 19: ²⁸ Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfil Scripture he said, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹ A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. ³⁰ When Jesus had tasted it, he said, “It is finished!”

Luke 23: ⁴⁶ Then Jesus shouted, “Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!” Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, ⁵² and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. ⁵³ They left the cemetery after Jesus’ resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people.

³⁹ When the Roman officer who stood facing him saw how he had died, he exclaimed, “This man truly was the Son of God!”

⁴⁸ And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow. ⁴⁹ But Jesus’ friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching, including Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the younger and of Joseph), and Salome. ⁴¹ They had been followers of Jesus and had cared for him while he was in Galilee. Many other women who had come with him to Jerusalem were also there.

John 19: ³¹ It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn’t want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. ³³ But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so

they didn't break his legs. ³⁴ One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. ³⁵ (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) ³⁶ These things happened in fulfilment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷ and "They will look on the one they pierced."

The Burial of Jesus

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19

Mark 15:⁴² This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath.

Luke 23:⁵⁰ Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who was a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders). He was a member of the Jewish high council, ⁵¹ but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He was a rich man from the town of Arimathea in Judea, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.

As evening approached, ⁴³ Joseph took a risk and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

⁴⁴ Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if he had died yet.

⁴⁵ The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate told Joseph he could have the body.

When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away.

³⁹ With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes.

⁴⁰ Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth.

⁴¹ The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was his own new tomb, never used before, which had been carved out of the rock.

⁴² And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.

⁵⁵ As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.

Saturday - The Guard at the Tomb

Matthew 27:⁶² The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate. ⁶³ They told him, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver once said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise from the dead.'⁶⁴ So we request that you seal the tomb until the third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing his body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first."

⁶⁵ Pilate replied, "Take guards and secure it the best you can." ⁶⁶ So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

Easter Sunday

The Resurrection

Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20

Dawn

Mark 16:¹ Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. ³On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"

Matthew 28:² Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. ³His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

⁵ Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying.

³ So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

⁵ The women were shocked and terrified, and bowed with their faces to the ground.

⁶ but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body.

Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive?"

⁶ He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."

⁷ Now go quickly and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died."

Early Morning

The Report of the Guard

⁸ Then they remembered that he (Jesus) had said this. ⁸ The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy.

⁹ So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened.

Matthew 28 ¹¹ As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. ¹² A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. ¹³ They told the soldiers, "You must say, 'Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.' ¹⁴ If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you so you won't get in trouble." ¹⁵ So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. ¹¹ But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. ¹² However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look.

Peter and John visit the tomb

John 20 ³ Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. ⁴ They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. ⁸ Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— ⁹ for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then they went home.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

John 20 ¹¹ Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹² She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. ¹⁵ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

¹⁶ "Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

¹⁷ "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

Mark 16 ⁹ After Jesus rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, the first person who saw him was Mary Magdalene, the woman from whom he had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰ She went to the disciples, who were grieving and weeping, and told them what had happened. ¹¹ But when she told them that Jesus was alive and she had seen him, they didn't believe her.

The Walk to Emmaus

Luke 24: ¹³ That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. ¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. ¹⁸ Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. ²⁰ But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

²² "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. ²³ They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! ²⁴ Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. ²⁶ Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" ²⁷ Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, ²⁹ but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. ³⁰ As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

³² They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" ³³ And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, ³⁴ who said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter."

Jesus Appears to Disciples

Luke 24: ³⁵ Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. ³⁶ And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said. ³⁷ But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!

³⁸ “Why are you frightened?” he asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt? ³⁹ Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.” ⁴⁰ As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet.

⁴¹ Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he ate it as they watched.

⁴⁴ Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ And he said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. ⁴⁷ It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’ ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of all these things.

⁴⁹ “And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

John 20 ²⁴ One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. ²⁵ They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

²⁸ “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

John 21 Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. ² Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

³ Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.”

“We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

⁴ At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. ⁵ He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?”

“No,” they replied.

⁶ Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

⁷ Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. ⁸ The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. ⁹ When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

¹⁰ “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

¹² “Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. ¹⁴ This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

Jesus Appears to Paul

1 Corinthians 15:³ I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴ He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. ⁵ He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.

John 20 ³⁰ The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

The Resurrection of Christ – Our Hope

1 Corinthians 15

15 Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. ² It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place.

³ I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴ He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. ⁵ He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. ⁹ For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church.

¹⁰ But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace. ¹¹ So it makes no difference whether I preach or they preach, for we all preach the same message you have already believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹² But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. ¹⁵ And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. ¹⁶ And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. ¹⁸ In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! ¹⁹ And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

²⁰ But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

²¹ So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. ²² Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. ²³ But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

²⁴ After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. ²⁵ For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. ²⁶ And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For the Scriptures say, "God has put all things under his authority." (Of course, when it says "all things are under his

authority,” that does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.)²⁸ Then, when all things are under his authority, the Son will put himself under God’s authority, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.

²⁹ If the dead will not be raised, what point is there in people being baptized for those who are dead? Why do it unless the dead will someday rise again?

³⁰ And why should we ourselves risk our lives hour by hour? ³¹ For I swear, dear brothers and sisters, that I face death daily. This is as certain as my pride in what Christ Jesus our Lord has done in you. ³² And what value was there in fighting wild beasts—those people of Ephesus—if there will be no resurrection from the dead? And if there is no resurrection, “Let’s feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!” ³³ Don’t be fooled by those who say such things, for “bad company corrupts good character.” ³⁴ Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don’t know God at all.

The Resurrection Body

³⁵ But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” ³⁶ What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies first. ³⁷ And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting. ³⁸ Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different plant grows from each kind of seed. ³⁹ Similarly there are different kinds of flesh—one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

⁴⁰ There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the glory of the earthly bodies. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory.

⁴² It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. ⁴³ Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. ⁴⁴ They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.

⁴⁵ The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.” But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. ⁴⁶ What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. ⁴⁷ Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. ⁴⁸ Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man. ⁴⁹ Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.

⁵⁰ What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.

⁵¹ But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

⁵⁴ Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

⁵⁶ For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power.⁵⁷ But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.