

HOLY WEEK

7-day Devotional

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SUNDAY

Jesus enters the city just as over 500 years before had been prophesied by Zechariah.

Lazarus had recently been raised from the dead, and the crowd were in a frenzy!

Some had followed Him there, some were anticipating His arrival. "Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! Praise God in the highest heaven!"

What a scene. Palm branches underfoot. Some man's brand new cloak is being trodden on by a donkey.
Believers, shouters, and probably a few doubters.

Whether the crowd knows it or not, they are right on target. He is the Son of David, The One they've been waiting for.

WHAT A THOUGHT: An Israeli man that lived over 500 years before all of the people in this scene, literally described it. You can read it for yourself in Zechariah 9:9. This week had been in God's heart eons before it was ever played out on Jerusalem soil. And it's just the beginning.

READ ABOUT SUNDAY:

Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, John 12:12-19.

MONDAY

On Monday, Jesus tossed some tables! And not just any tables, temple tables. There was a wave of righteous anger in His bosom on Monday. Things needed to change inside and out and in just a few days, everything would.

The Chief priests are offended, and the scribes are shaking their heads. Who does this man think He is anyway? That's what they were probably thinking. "They were seeking a way to destroy him because they feared him..." (Mark 11:18).

Oh, and Jesus curses a fig tree. I wonder what He was thinking that day as He walked with His disciples. Surely what was awaiting Him on Friday was on His mind.

He really upset the religious leaders on Monday. More fuel for their fire.

"That evening Jesus and the disciples left the city."

WHAT A THOUGHT: Jesus was serious about the things His Father was serious about. Seeing the temple be turned into a for-profit enterprise, just didn't sit right with Him. On Sunday, the crowd carries out Zechariah's words, on Monday Jesus quotes Jeremiah's. (see Jeremiah 7:11)

Everything is going according to plan.

READ ABOUT MONDAY:

Matthew 21:12-22, Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-48.

TUESDAY

“The next morning as they passed by the fig tree he had cursed, the disciples noticed it had withered from the roots up.”

What Power. What Authority. When Jesus speaks fig trees listen.
Side note: ***Do we?***

The fig tree didn't question Jesus' authority but when He enters the temple the chief priests and the elders do, “By what authority do you do these things?” Per usual Jesus stumps them with a question of His own.

Moving on.

Jesus does what He has done so many times before, He begins to teach. Parable after parable, He gives the people a glimpse of the true Kingdom of God.

He also takes the time to teach His disciples about forgiveness, *again*. If they only knew that in three short days, He would forgive them and all of His accusers from a cursed tree.

I wonder if the crowd from Sunday was listening.

WHAT A THOUGHT: Jesus used the words of the Prophet David (Psalm 110:1) to close the question and answer portion of his teaching on Tuesday. Tuesday reminds me that Jesus isn't afraid to answer tough questions. *Why are we so afraid to ask them?*

READ ABOUT TUESDAY:

Matthew 21:23–24:51, Mark 11:20–13:37, Luke 20:1–21:36, John 12:20–38.

W E D N E S D A Y

What happened on Wednesday? Scholars are torn. Some say it's impossible to know. But, I'm with those who believe that some powerful storylines were playing out that day.

Jesus sets his sights on the Passover and the Crucifixion, "At that same time the leading priests and elders were meeting at the residence of Caiaphas, the high priest, plotting..."

Meanwhile, Jesus goes to the house of a man that's identified as a leper and enjoys a meal. Then, something happens that makes a disciple or two angry.

They still don't know who Jesus is.

The one that has been on the fence all along, Judas, decides he has had enough and seeks to betray Him. "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?"

Things are about to speed up on Thursday.

WHAT A THOUGHT: Did Judas realize he was fulfilling the words of the prophet Zechariah on Wednesday (Zechariah 11:12-13)? Thirty pieces of silver for the blood and body of The Son of God.

READ ABOUT WEDNESDAY:

Matthew 26:1-16

THURSDAY

THURSDAY! *So much happened on Thursday!*
Celebration, remembrance, foot-washing, and betrayal.

The Eucharist. "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."

What was He saying? What were they thinking?

They had celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread with The Master before, but this...this was different. He had already washed their feet and informed them that there was a betrayer in their midst, and now this.

But that's not even half of it. Then comes the garden. They'd been there together before, but tonight everything would change. Jesus prays a prayer that we sometimes like to overlook. "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." Was He scared? Did He doubt? Could He feel the pain that awaited Him?

Thank God He submitted to the will of the Father or I would not be typing these words.

I could stay on Thursday forever.
But I'd rather you read about it for yourself.

WHAT A THOUGHT: What started in a garden ended in a garden. Adam and Eve's willful rebellion in the Garden of Eden was trumped by a submissive prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

READ ABOUT THURSDAY:

Matthew 26:17-75, Mark 14:12-72, Luke 22:7-62, John 13:1-38.

FRIDAY

We call it Good Friday, but I'm pretty sure, at the time, the disciples thought it was the worst. A totally out-of-order early morning trial, a beating fit for the most despicable of men, and a death that shook the earth and darkened the heavens.

Jesus.

As I type these words I can hardly stand it. The Sinless One. I mean He NEVER did anything wrong. Tempted just like us in every possible way. Thank God He withstood every single test and temptation so that He could be a fitting Lamb. Blameless. Spotless.

All our sins heaped on Him. All the punishment.

Jesus was dead.

But Friday wasn't over, let's turn our attention to His secret disciples: "Joseph and "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. Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth."

What a picture. These two men with power and prominence wrapped their King's body with linen cloths. *Would we have done the same?*

WHAT A THOUGHT: "And they will look on me, on him whom they have pierced..." These are the words the prophet Zechariah takes down from the mouth of God. Surely, His Word does not return void. I wonder if the men and women that were shouting, "Crucify Him!," were ever able to remove from their memory the sight of Jesus hanging on that tree.

READ ABOUT FRIDAY:

Matthew 27:1-61, Mark 15:1-47, Luke 22:63-23:56, John 18:28- 19:42

SATURDAY

Some call it Silent. Tell that to the ladies in Jesus' circle. Some bold and beautiful women begin to make preparations to anoint Jesus' body, again.

"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."

But that's not all that happened on Saturday. "The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate. 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.' 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."

On Saturday, hell got nervous.

What a laugh! They thought placing a guard at the tomb could stop the inevitable. They thought they were in control. They thought they had succeeded. How foolish they were.

I wonder if some of them were nervous because the veil had been ripped from top to bottom in the temple (Matthew 27:51). I mean, how can you explain that?

What made hell so nervous? God. He's not a man that He should lie, if He says He's rising in three days, He's rising in three days.

You better believe it.

WHAT A THOUGHT: The day after death is indeed gruesome for those who have lost a loved one. Were any of the disciples able to follow through with the Sabbath rituals or had they cried all night long? Did some of them drown their sorrow with a heavy drink? I'd like to think that Matthew was remembering the words of Jesus that we find in Matthew 16:21, "and on the third day...".

READ ABOUT SATURDAY: Matthew 27:62-66, Mark 16:1

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But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for *He has risen, just as He said [He would].*

Come! See the place where He was lying. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee [as He promised]. There you will see Him; behold, I have told you.

Matthew 28:5-7