



Bi60

PASSION WEEK

The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

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“Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He isn't here. He is risen, just as He said.” – *Matthew 28:5, 6*

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What Is Bi60?

Have you ever heard of reading the Bible in a year? How about reading the Bible in an hour? Welcome to Bi60 – the Bible in 60 minutes – a simple compilation of select passages to present the big picture of the Bible in a small amount of time.

The idea of Bi60 came to me one Wednesday night at church in the fall of 2020. A team of staff members and volunteers had pieced together a set of prayers that they read from the stage. Members of the congregation prayed with them as they read. The service lasted for about an hour and the whole experience was wonderful!

As I drove home that evening, I wondered about doing something similar to the prayer service but reading Scripture for an hour. How wonderful it would be to hear God’s Word in such a unique way! Thus, Bi60 was born! I soon created various themes and started the process of selecting passages of Scripture. Individuals, small groups, and, yes, even congregations can read these select Bible verses and hear God’s Word in an unfamiliar way.

My intention was not to manipulate Scripture but to piece together complementary passages in a way that our sectioned Bibles cannot accomplish. In the meantime, readers will experience God’s Word, His wisdom, instructions, and encouragements in a way they never have before.

The Translation

For Bi60, I used the *New Living Translation* for several reasons. First, the *NLT* is an unfamiliar translation to most Christians, not that people are unaware of the *NLT* but that they do not read it regularly. The more popular translations include the *KJV*, *NKJV*, *NIV*, *ESV*, and *NASB*. Since the *NLT* is unfamiliar to most of us, it is a refreshing reading experience.

Second, I chose the *NLT* for its readability. While the other translations are excellent in their respective ways, they do require readers to possess a higher comprehension level, from 9th grade (*NIV*) to 12th grade (*KJV*). But the *NLT* requires a seventh-grade comprehension level, so it is very easy to understand and allows for smooth, story-like reading.

Third, I chose the *NLT* because it coincides with the *One Year Chronological Bible (NLT)* from Tyndale Publishing, the Bible for which I produced my *Study Guide* and *Daily Reflections* (visit BiAY.org for more details). The Bi60 selections are a mixture of the *New Living Translation* and the *One Year Chronological Bible*. Where the two versions are not identical, I chose the version that made the most sense to me or was the easiest to read. If I added words for clarification or transition purposes, I wrote them in brackets [].

How to Read Bi60

While every word in Bi60 is from the Bible (except for my bracketed clarifications and transitions), I took the references out and added them as footnotes for a smoother reading experience.

The Bi60 may take more or less than one hour, depending on each participant’s reading pace. Each Bi60 booklet has roughly 12,000 words which, when read at an average speed, will take about sixty minutes. The primary purpose of Bi60 is not the amount of time it takes to read the passages but to enjoy God’s Word in a new and refreshing way. I trust that He will bless your time in the Bi60.

Praise God! We serve a risen Savior!

Aaron

Bi60 PASSION WEEK

The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus

Introduction

In the beginning, the Word already existed. He was with God, and He *was* God. He existed in the beginning with God. He created everything there is. Nothing exists that He didn't make.¹

Although the world was made through Him, the world didn't recognize Him when He came. Even in His own land and among His own people, He was not accepted. But to all who believed Him, He gave the right to become children of God.²

This is how God loved the world – He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world but to save the world through Him.³

Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges, He took the humble position of a servant, and He was born as a human being.⁴

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about His appearance, nothing to attract us to Him. He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way.

He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses that He carried. It was our sorrows that weighed Him down. We thought His troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for His own sins. But He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so that we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

All of us, like sheep, have strayed. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on Him the sins of us all.

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet He never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. As a sheep is silent before the shearers, He did not open His mouth. He had done no wrong, but He was buried like a criminal.

But it was the LORD's good plan to crush Him and cause Him grief. Because of His experience, this Righteous Servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for He will bear all their sins.⁵ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.⁶

The Story Begins⁷

Jesus gathered the twelve disciples around Him and said, "As you know, we are going to Jerusalem. When we get there, all the predictions of the ancient prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true. He will be handed over to the Romans to be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit upon. They will whip Him and kill Him, but on the third day, He will rise again." But they didn't understand a thing He said. Its significance was hidden from them, and they failed to grasp what He was talking about.

Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus, the man He had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with Him. Then Mary took a jar of expensive perfume and she anointed Jesus' feet, wiping His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.⁸

But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray Him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given

¹ *John 1:1-4*

² *John 1:10-13*

³ *John 3:16, 17*

⁴ *Philippians 2:6, 7*

⁵ *Isaiah 53:2-11*

⁶ *2 Corinthians 5:21*

⁷ *Luke 1:3; 18:31-34*

⁸ *Mark 14:6, 7; John 12:1-11*

to the poor,” not that He cared for the poor. He was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, he often stole some for himself.

Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for My burial. You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want. But I will not be with you much longer.”

The Triumphal Entry⁹

The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A huge crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet Him.

As He and the disciples came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of them ahead. “Go into the village over there,” He said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.”

This took place to fulfill the prophecy [of Zechariah] that said, “Tell the people of Jerusalem, ‘Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey, riding on a donkey’s colt.’”¹⁰

The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. They brought the donkey and the colt to Him and threw their garments over the colt, and He sat on it.¹¹ Then the crowds spread out their coats on the road.

As they reached the place where the road started down from the Mount of Olives, all of His followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God. “[Hosanna!] Bless the King who comes in the name of the Lord,” they said. “Peace and glory in the highest heaven!”

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!”

The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as He entered. The Pharisees in the crowd said, “Jesus, rebuke Your followers for saying things like that!”

Jesus replied, “If they were to keep quiet, the stones by the road would burst into cheers!”

But as Jesus came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, He began to cry. “How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls. They will crush you into the ground. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you rejected the opportunity God offered you.”

Jesus Predicts His Death¹²

Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration asked to meet Jesus. Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

Jesus replied, “The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into His glory. Unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels — a plentiful harvest of new lives. Now My soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’ This is the very reason that I came! Father, bring glory to Your name.”

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to My name, and I will do so again.” When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to Him.

Then Jesus told them, “The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out; and when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to Myself.” He said this to indicate how He was going to die.

⁹ *Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:36-44; John 12:12-19*

¹⁰ *Zechariah 9:9*

¹² *John 12:20-36*

Jesus Clears the Temple¹³

The next morning, when they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the merchants and their customers. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the stalls of those selling doves. He said, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be a place of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”

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. That evening Jesus and the disciples left the city and returned to Bethany, where they stayed overnight.

The Authority of Jesus Challenged¹⁴

The next morning, when they arrived in Jerusalem again, Jesus walked through the Temple area. The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders came up to Him. They demanded, “By whose authority did You drive out the merchants from the Temple? Who gave You the right to do that?”

Jesus replied, “I’ll tell you if you answer one question. Did John’s authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human?”

They talked it over among themselves. “If we say it was from heaven, He will ask why we didn’t believe John. But do we dare say it was merely human?” For they were afraid that the people would start a riot, since everyone believed that John was a prophet. So they finally replied, “We don’t know.”

Jesus responded, “Then, I won’t answer your question either.”

Story of the Evil Farmers¹⁵

Then, Jesus told a story. “A man planted a vineyard. He built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to

another country. At the time of the grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers grabbed the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed.

“The owner then sent another servant, but they insulted him and beat him over the head. The next servant he sent was killed. Others he sent were either beaten or killed, until there was only one left — his son whom he loved dearly. The owner finally sent him, thinking, ‘Surely they will respect my son.’

“But the tenant farmers said to one another, ‘Here comes the heir to the estate. Let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!’ So they grabbed him, murdered him, and threw his body out of the vineyard.”

“How terrible that such a thing should ever happen,” His listeners protested.

Jesus asked, “What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do? I’ll tell you. He will kill those farmers and lease the vineyard to others. I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit.”

The religious leaders wanted to arrest Jesus because they realized He was telling the story against them. They were the wicked farmers. But they were afraid of the crowd, who considered Jesus to be a prophet, so they left Him and went away.

Taxes for Caesar¹⁶

Later, the religious leaders sent secret agents, some Pharisees and supporters of Herod, pretending to be honest men, to trap Jesus into saying something for which He could be arrested. “Teacher,” they said, “we know how honest You are. You teach the way of God truthfully. Now tell us, is it right to pay taxes to the Roman government or not?”

Jesus knew their evil motives and saw through their hypocrisy and said, “You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trap Me with your trick questions? Show Me

¹³ *Matthew 21:14-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:48*

¹⁴ *Matthew 21:21-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8*

¹⁵ *Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19*

¹⁶ *Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26*

a Roman coin, and I'll tell you." When they handed it to Him, He asked, "Whose picture and title are stamped on it?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

"Well then," Jesus said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God." This reply completely amazed them. Instead, they were silenced and went away.

Every day Jesus went to the Temple to teach, and each evening He returned to spend the night on the Mount of Olives. The crowds gathered at the Temple early each morning to hear Him.

The Plot to Kill Jesus¹⁷

Jesus said to His disciples, "As you know, the Passover celebration and the Festival of Unleavened Bread begin in two days, and I, the Son of Man, will be betrayed and crucified."

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

Then Satan entered Judas Iscariot. He went to the leading priests and asked, "How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?" The priests were delighted when they heard why he had come, and they promised him a reward -- thirty pieces of silver. From that time on, Judas began looking for the right time and place to betray Jesus so that they could arrest Him quietly when the crowds weren't around.

Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lambs were sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together." They went off to the city and prepared the Passover meal.¹⁸

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet¹⁹

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that His hour had come to leave this world and return to His Father. Jesus also knew that the Father had given Him authority over everything. So He got up from the table, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, and poured water into a basin. Then He began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel He had around Him.

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?"

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

Peter protested, "You will never wash my feet!"

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

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

Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. You disciples are clean, but that is not true of everyone here." Jesus knew who would betray Him.

After washing their feet, He put on His robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call Me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. But since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow."

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal²⁰

It was time for supper, and the devil had enticed Judas to betray Jesus. Jesus sat down at the table and said, "I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat this Passover meal with you before My sufferings begin."

¹⁷ *Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11; Luke 22:1-6*

¹⁸ *Matthew 26:17, 19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13*

¹⁹ *John 13:1-17*

²⁰ *Matthew 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-30; John 13:18-35*

While they were eating, Jesus was in great anguish. He said, “One of you will betray Me. The Scripture declares that, ‘The one who shares food with Me will turn against Me.’”²¹

Peter leaned toward Jesus and asked, “Who is it?”

Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, “Am I the one, Lord?”

He replied, “One of you who has just eaten from this bowl with Me will betray Me. For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. It is part of God’s plan. But how terrible it will be for My betrayer. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!” Then Jesus dipped some bread and said, “My betrayer is the one to whom I give this bread.” He gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot.

Judas, the one who would betray Him, also asked, “Teacher, I’m not the one, am I?”

Jesus told him, “You have said it yourself.” As soon as Judas ate the bread, Satan entered into him.

Jesus said to him, “Hurry and do it now.” None of the others knew what Jesus meant. Since Judas was the treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

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 by what happens to Me. How brief are these moments before I must go away and leave you! As I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for Me, but you can’t come where I am going.”

Simon Peter asked, “Lord, where are You going?”

Jesus replied, “You can’t go with Me now, but you will follow Me later.”

“But why can’t I come now, Lord?” he asked. “I’m ready to die for You.”

Jesus replied, “Peter, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to Me again, strengthen your brothers.”

Peter said, “Lord, I am ready to go to prison with You, and even to die with You.”

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.’²² But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.”

Peter declared, “Even if everyone else deserts You, I never will.”

Jesus replied, “The truth is, Peter, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny that you even know Me, and this will happen three times.”

“No!” Peter insisted. “Even if I have to die with You, I will never deny You!” All the other disciples vowed the same.

The Way to the Father²³

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled,” Jesus said. “You trust God. Now trust in Me. There are many rooms in My Father’s home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with Me where I am. You know where I am going and how to get there.”

“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where You are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me. If you know Me, then you know who My Father is.”

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

²² *Zechariah 13:7*

²³ *John 14:1-14*

²¹ *Psalms 41:9*

Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father! So why are you asking Me to show Him to you? The words I speak are not My own, but My Father who lives in Me does His work through Me.”

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit²⁴

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it isn’t looking for Him and doesn’t recognize Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you now and later will be in you.

“I will not abandon you as orphans. I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me. Since I live, you also will live. But when the Father sends the Counselor — that is, the Holy Spirit — He will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

“I am leaving you with a gift — peace of mind and heart. The peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you. I am going away, but I will come back to you again. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

“I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over Me, but I will do what the Father requires of Me, so that the world will know that I love the Father.”

Sadness Will Be Turned to Joy²⁵

Then, Jesus said, “In a little while, I will be gone, and you won’t see Me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see Me again. You will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to Me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to joy. It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a

new baby into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again.

“The Father Himself loves you dearly because you love Me and believe that I came from God. Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father.

“The time is coming — indeed it’s here now — when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving Me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with Me.”

The Prayer of Jesus²⁶

After Jesus had finished saying all these things, He looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so He can give glory back to You. He gives eternal life to each one You have given Him; and this is the way to have eternal life — to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one You sent to earth. I brought glory to You here on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do. Now, Father, bring Me into the glory we shared before the world began.

“I have told these men about You. They were in the world, but then You gave them to Me. They have kept your word, for I have passed on to them the words You gave Me. They accepted them and know that I came from You, and they believe You sent Me.

“I am leaving them behind and coming to You. Holy Father, keep them and care for them. During My time here, I have kept them safe. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

“The world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by Your truth. Teach them Your Word, which is truth. Just as You sent Me into the world, I am sending

²⁴ *John 14:15-31*

²⁵ *John 16:16-33*

²⁶ *John 17:1-26*

them into the world. Now, I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy.

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in Me. I pray that they will all be one, just as You and I are one. Father, I want these whom You have given Me to be with Me where I am. Then they can see all the glory You gave Me because You loved Me even before the world began.”

As they continued 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, given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” He also 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, for this is My blood, which seals the covenant between God and His people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many.” Then they sang a hymn and went to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane²⁷

Jesus and His disciples crossed the Kidron Valley and entered a grove of olive trees. Judas, the betrayer, knew this place well, because Jesus had gone there many times with His disciples.

Jesus said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go on ahead to pray.” He took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, James and John, and He began to be filled with anguish and deep distress. He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me.”

He went on a little farther and fell face down on the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting Him might pass Him by. “My Father,” He said, “Everything is possible for You. Please let this cup of suffering be taken away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine.” Then, an angel appeared and strengthened Him. He prayed more fervently, and He was in such agony of spirit that His sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.

After some time, Jesus returned to the disciples and found them asleep, exhausted from grief. He said to Peter, “Couldn’t you stay awake and watch with Me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!”

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.” When He returned to them again, He found them sleeping, for they couldn’t keep their eyes open, and they didn’t know what to say.

So He went to pray a third time, saying the same things again. Then He came to the disciples and said, “The time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! My betrayer is here!”

Jesus Is Arrested²⁸

Even as Jesus said this, Judas arrived with a mob that was armed with swords and clubs. The chief priests and Pharisees had given Judas a battalion of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

Jesus, who realized all that was going to happen to Him, stepped forward to meet them and said, “Who are you looking for?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am He,” Jesus said. At His words, all of the men fell backward to the ground!

Once more He asked, “Who are you looking for?”

Again they replied, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus said, “I told you, I am He; and since I am the one you want, let these others go.” He did this to fulfill His own statement, “I have not lost a single one of those You gave Me.”

²⁷ *Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1, 2*

²⁸ *Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:3-11*

The traitor, Judas, had given the guards a prearranged signal. “You will know which one to arrest when I greet Him with a kiss. Then you can take Him away.”

So Judas came to Jesus and said, “Teacher.” Then, he gave Him the kiss.

Jesus replied, “Judas. You betray the Son of Man with a kiss? Go ahead and do what you have come for.”

When the disciples saw what was about to happen, they exclaimed, “Lord, should we fight? We have the swords!” Then, the guards grabbed Jesus and arrested Him. But Peter drew his sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest.

But Jesus said, “Put away your sword, Peter! Those who use the sword will die by the sword. Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and He would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now? Shall I not drink from the cup the Father has given Me?” Then, Jesus walked over to the servant and touched the place where his ear had been and healed him.

Then Jesus turned to the crowd, “Am I some dangerous criminal, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest Me? 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; and all of this is happening to fulfill the words of the prophets as recorded in the Scriptures.”

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

Jesus Questioned by Officials²⁹

So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied Him up. First they took Him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, “It’s better that one man should die for the people.”

Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another disciple, who was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest’s courtyard with Jesus. 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.

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

Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about His followers and what He had been teaching them. 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. Why are you asking Me this question? Ask those who heard Me. They know what I said.”

Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby struck Jesus across the face. “Is that the way to answer the high priest?” he demanded.

Jesus replied, “If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I’m speaking the truth, why are you hitting Me?” Then Annas bound Jesus and sent Him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Jesus Before the Council³⁰

Then the people who had arrested Jesus led Him to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of religious law and the elders had gathered. Meanwhile, Peter followed them at a distance and came to the high priest’s courtyard. He slipped inside the gates and sat with the guards by the fire and waited to see what would happen to Jesus.

Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find witnesses who would lie about Jesus, so they could put Him to death. But even though they found many who agreed to give false witness, they contradicted each other. Finally, two men came forward who declared, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the Temple of God and in three

²⁹ *John 18:12-24*

³⁰ *Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65*

days, I will build another made without human hands.” But even they didn’t get their stories straight!

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Well, aren’t You going to answer these charges? What do You have to say for Yourself?” But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to Him, “I demand in the name of the living God, tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

Jesus replied, “It is as you say; and in the future 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.”

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

“Guilty!” they shouted. “He deserves to die!”

Then they began to spit in Jesus’ face and beat Him with their fists. Some slapped Him, jeering, “Prophecy to us, Messiah! Who hit You that time?” The guards continued to hit Him as they led Him away.

Peter Denies Jesus³¹

Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl noticed Peter warming himself by the fire. She came over, looked at him closely, and said, “You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean.”

But Peter denied it in front of everyone. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said. He then went out into the entryway.

Later, out by the gate, another servant girl noticed him and said to those standing around, “This man was definitely with Jesus of Nazareth.”

Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. “I don’t even know the man,” he said.

About an hour later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter. One of them was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off. “Didn’t I see you in the olive grove? You must be one of them. We can tell by your Galilean accent.”

Peter swore, “I swear by God! I don’t know the man!” Then, the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

Immediately, the rooster crowed. Suddenly, Jesus’ words flashed through Peter’s mind, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” Peter went away, crying bitterly.

Judas Hangs Himself³²

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. “I have sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.”

“What do we care?” they replied. “That’s your problem.” Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went out and hanged himself.

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.” After some discussion they decided to buy the potter’s field, and they made it into a cemetery for foreigners. That is why the field is called the Field of Blood. 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 — and purchased the potter’s field.”³³

Jesus’ Trial Before Pilate³⁴

Very early in the morning the leading priests and the elders of the people met again to lay plans for putting Jesus to death. Then they bound Him, led Him away, and took Him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

³² *Matthew 27:3-10*

³³ *Jeremiah 32:6-9; Zechariah 11:12, 13*

³⁴ *Matthew 27:11-26; Mark 15:2-15; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-19:16*

³¹ *Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:25-27*

Jesus' accusers didn't go into Pilate's headquarters because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover feast. So Pilate went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?"

"We wouldn't have handed Him over if He weren't a criminal," they said.

"Then take Him away and judge Him by your own laws," Pilate told them. He knew that the Jewish leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.

"Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied. This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way He would die.

The leading priests and elders accused Jesus of many crimes, but He remained silent. "This man has been leading our people to ruin," they said, "by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming to be the Messiah, a king."

"Don't You hear these charges against You?" Pilate demanded. But Jesus made no response, much to the governor's surprise. Then Pilate went back inside and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked.

Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about Me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate said. "Your own people and their leading priests brought You to me for trial. Why? What have You done?"

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."

Pilate said, "So You are a king?"

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king, and you are right. Actually, I was born for this purpose, and I

came to bring truth to the world. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "I find nothing wrong with this man. He is not guilty of any crime."

Then the leading priests became desperate. "But He is causing riots everywhere He goes, all over Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem!"

"Oh, He is a Galilean?" Pilate asked. When they answered 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.

Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had been hoping to see Him perform a miracle. He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer. Meanwhile, the leading priests and religious teachers stood there shouting their accusations. Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on Him and sent Him back to Pilate.

Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people. As Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message, "Leave that innocent man alone. I had a terrible nightmare about Him last night."

Pilate 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. Herod came to the same conclusion and sent Him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. But, you have a custom of asking me to release someone from prison each year at Passover. So if you want me to, I'll release the King of the Jews."

Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd — anyone they wanted. This year there was a

notorious prisoner, a man named Barabbas, who was convicted of murder during an insurrection.

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

The crowd shouted back, “Barabbas!”

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

They shouted back, “Crucify Him!”

“Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has He committed?”

Then Pilate had Jesus flogged. The soldiers wove a crown of long, sharp thorns and put it on His head, and they put a royal robe on Him. “Hail! King of the Jews!” they mocked, as they hit Him with their fists.

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.” Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate said, “Here is the man!”

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.”

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

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

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.”

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.”

When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform. Pilate said to the people, “Here is your king!”

“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.

The mob shouted louder, demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their voices prevailed. Pilate saw that he wasn’t getting anywhere and 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!”

All the people yelled back, “We will take responsibility for His death — we and our children!” So Pilate released Barabbas to them. Then, he turned Jesus over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

The Crucifixion³⁵

Some of the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into their headquarters and called out the entire battalion. They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. 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, yelling, “Hail! King of the Jews!” They spit on Him and grabbed the stick and struck Him on the head with it. Then, they blindfolded Him and struck Him,

³⁵ *Matthew 27:27-44; Mark 15:16-32; Luke 23:1-43; John 19:17-27*

saying, “Who hit You that time, prophet?” 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.

Along the way, they came across a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene. He was coming in from the country just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus’ cross. Great crowds trailed along behind, including many grief-stricken women. But Jesus turned and said to them, “Don’t weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For the days are coming when people will beg for the mountains to fall on them and the hills to bury them.”

Then they went out to a place called Golgotha, which means “Place of the Skull.” The soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with bitter gall, but when He tasted it, He refused to drink it.

It was nine o’clock in the morning when the crucifixion took place. The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. After they had nailed Him to the cross, the soldiers divided Jesus’ clothes among them. They also took His seamless robe, woven in one piece. One of them said, “Let’s not tear it but throw dice to see who gets it.”

This fulfilled the Scripture that says, “They divided my clothes among them and threw dice for my robe.”³⁶ So that is what they did. Then they sat around and kept guard as He hung there.

Pilate ordered that a signboard be posted above Jesus’ head, announcing the charge against Him. The words were in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The sign said, “This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

But the leading priests said to Pilate, “Change the sign from ‘King of the Jews’ to ‘He *said* that He was the King of the Jews.’”

Pilate replied, “What I have written, I have written. It stays exactly as it is.”

Two others, both criminals, were led out to be crucified with Him. Jesus was on the center cross, and the two criminals were on either side. The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. “Look at You now!” they yelled. “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!”

The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but He can’t save Himself! Is He the King of Israel? Let Him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in Him. He trusted God, so let God show His approval by rescuing Him now! For He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

Jesus said, “Father, forgive these people, because they don’t know what they are doing.”

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!”

But the other criminal protested. “Don’t you fear God even when you are dying? We deserve to die for our evil deeds, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom.”

Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with Me in paradise.”

Standing near the cross were Jesus’ mother and His mother’s sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother standing there beside the disciple He loved, He said to her, “Woman, he is your son.” Then, He said to the disciple, “She is your mother.” From then on, this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus³⁷

At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. At about three o’clock, Jesus called out

³⁶ *Psalm 22:18*

³⁷ *Matthew 27:45-56; Mark 15:33-41; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:28-37*

with a loud voice, “My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me?”

Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought He was calling for the prophet Elijah. The rest said, “Wait! Let’s see whether Elijah comes to save Him.”

Jesus knew that everything was now finished, and to fulfill the Scriptures He said, “I am thirsty.” 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. When Jesus tasted it, He said, “It is finished!”

Then Jesus uttered another loud cry, saying, “Father, into Your hands I entrust My spirit.” With those words, He bowed His head and breathed His last. 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, and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. They left the cemetery, went into Jerusalem, and appeared to many people.

When the Captain of the Roman soldiers handling the executions saw what had happened, he praised God and said, “Surely this man was innocent.” He and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, “This man was truly the Son of God!”

When the crowd saw all that happened, they went home in deep sorrow. But Jesus’ friends were watching from a distance. Some women had come from Galilee with Jesus to care for Him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James and Joseph), and Salome, Zebedee’s wife, the mother of James and John.

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 Passover), so they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to

Jesus, they saw that He was already dead, so they didn’t break His legs.

One of the soldiers, however, pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, “Not one of His bones will be broken,”³⁸ and, “They will look on Him whom they pierced.”³⁹

The Burial of Jesus⁴⁰

As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea and honored member of the High Council, one of Jesus’ followers, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. He was a good and righteous man who had been waiting for the Kingdom of God to come. He had not agreed with the actions of the other religious leaders, but he followed Jesus in secret because he feared their reaction.

Pilate couldn’t believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer in charge and asked him. The officer confirmed the fact, and Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night, also came, bringing embalming ointment made from myrrh and aloes.

Together, they took Jesus’ body off of the cross and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth with the spices, as is the Jewish custom for burial. The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb carved out of the rock. It had never been used before. Because it was the day of preparation before the Passover and since the tomb was close, they laid Jesus there. Then they rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.

Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting nearby watching. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to embalm Him. But by the time they were finished it was the Sabbath, so they rested all that day as required by the law.

³⁸ *Psalm 34:20*

³⁹ *Zechariah 12:10*

⁴⁰ *Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42*

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.”

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

The Resurrection⁴¹

After the Sabbath, on the first day of the week, as the new day was dawning, several women went to visit the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. On the way they were discussing who would roll the stone away from the tomb for them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fainted and fell to the ground.

When the women arrived, they saw the stone had already been rolled to the side. Mary Magdalene ran and found Peter and John. She said, “They have taken the Lord’s body out of the tomb, and I don’t know where they have put Him!” Immediately, Peter and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves.

Meanwhile, the other women entered the tomb but couldn’t find the body of Jesus. They were puzzled, trying to think of what could have happened to it. Suddenly, two men appeared in dazzling robes. The women were startled and bowed low before them, but one of the angels said, “Don’t be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. But why are you looking for the living among the dead? He isn’t here! Don’t you remember what He said? ‘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?’ He is risen from the dead, just as He said would happen. Look, see where His body was lying. Now, go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and He is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him there.”

The women ran quickly from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, saying nothing to anyone because they were too frightened to talk. But, they were also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel’s message.

Soon, Peter and John arrived at the tomb. John outran Peter and arrived first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. Peter did not stop but went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then John went in also, and he saw and believed. Until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. Puzzled, they went home.

Mary Magdalene was standing outside the tomb crying, after the disciples left. As she wept, she stooped and looked in. 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. “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.” She glanced over her shoulder and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize Him. She thought He was the gardener.

“Who are you looking for?” Jesus asked her.

“Sir,” she said, “if you have taken Him away, tell me where you have put Him.”

“Mary!” Jesus said.

She turned to Him and cried out, “Teacher!”

⁴¹ *Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18*

“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.’”

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and said, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them His message.

As the other women looked for the disciples, Jesus appeared to them and greeted them. They ran to Him, grasped His feet, and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid! Go tell My brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see Me there.”

Meanwhile, some of the guards from the tomb went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. A meeting with the religious leaders was called, and they decided to bribe the soldiers. They told them, “You must say, ‘Jesus’ disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole His body.’ If the governor hears about it, we’ll stand up for you so you won’t get in trouble.” So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say.⁴²

The Walk to Emmaus⁴³

That same day two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus Himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But God kept them from recognizing Him.

He asked them, “What is it that you are discussing so intently?”

They stopped and explained, with sadness on their faces. Then, one of them named Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened the last few days.”

“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. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed Him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified Him. We had thought He was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

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

Then Jesus said to them, “Do you find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures? Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before His time of glory?” Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if He were going on, but they begged Him, “Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.” So He went home with them.

As they sat down to eat, Jesus took the bread and blessed it. Then He broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. At that moment He disappeared!

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?” Within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the disciples and the others who had gathered with them. They were meeting behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. When they greeted the two men from Emmaus, they gave them a report, “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.”

⁴² *Matthew 28:11-15*

⁴³ *Luke 24:13-34*

Jesus Appears to the Disciples⁴⁴

Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking, and how they had recognized Him as He was breaking the bread. As they were telling about it, Jesus Himself was suddenly standing there among them.

“Peace be with you,” He said. But the whole group was startled, thinking they were seeing a ghost! “Why are you frightened?” He asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt? 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.”

As He spoke, He showed them His hands and His feet. Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then He asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He ate it as they watched.

Jesus Appears to Thomas⁴⁵

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas, was not with the others when Jesus came. 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.”

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. Then He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at My hands. Put your hand into the wound in My side. Do not doubt any longer but believe!”

Thomas exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen Me. Blessed are those who have never seen Me and still believe.”

⁴⁴ *Luke 24:35-43; John 20:19-23*

⁴⁵ *John 20:24-29*

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples⁴⁶

Later, Jesus appeared to several disciples beside the Sea of Galilee — Peter, Thomas, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others.

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.

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

“No,” they replied.

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

Then John said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Peter heard that it was the Lord, he jumped into the water, and headed to shore. The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards out. When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them — fish cooking over a charcoal fire and some bread.

“Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. So Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore.

“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. Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to His disciples since He had been raised from the dead.

After breakfast Jesus asked Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?”

⁴⁶ *John 21:1-14*

“Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love You.”

“Then feed My lambs,” Jesus told him.

Jesus repeated the question, “Simon, do you love Me?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “You know I love You.”

“Then take care of My sheep,” Jesus said.

A third time He asked Peter, “Do you love Me?”

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, You know everything. You know that I love You.”

Jesus said, “Then feed My sheep.”

Jesus continued, “When you were young, you were able to do as you liked. You went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will take you where you don’t want to go.” Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “Follow Me.”

Peter turned around and saw John behind them. He asked, “What about him, Lord?”

Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me.”

The Great Commission⁴⁷

Then Jesus told His disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you, and be sure of this -- I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

“Now, I will send you the Holy Spirit, just as My Father promised. Remember what I told you, John

baptized with water, but I will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’ Therefore, stay in Jerusalem until the Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”

The Ascension⁴⁸

Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and the disciples kept asking Him, “Lord, has the time come for You to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

He replied, “The Father has the authority to set those dates and times. They are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. You will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere — in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Then, Jesus lifted His hands to heaven and blessed them. While He was blessing them, Jesus was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see Him.

As they strained to see Him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you, but someday He will return the same way you saw Him go!” So the disciples worshiped and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy.

Reflections on the Resurrection⁴⁹

These things were written so that you may know 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.⁵⁰ Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, He was seen by more than 500 of His followers at one time.

Now, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? For if there is no resurrection, then Christ has not been raised either. If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is

⁴⁸ *Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11*

⁴⁹ *1 Corinthians 15; Phillipians 2:3-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

⁵⁰ *John 20:30, 31*

⁴⁷ *Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:5*

useless, and your faith is useless. We would 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; and if Christ has not been raised, then you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! If our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

But, the truth is that Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first to be risen of a great [number] of all who have died. So you see, just as death came into the world through Adam, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through Jesus. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. 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. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies.

Our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 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. We who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die.

But what about those who have already died? We do not have to grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, He will bring back with Him the believers who have died.

For the Lord will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers

who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air! Then, we will be with the Lord forever. Encourage one another with these words.

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

“Death is swallowed up in victory.
O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?”⁵¹

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God, He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, my friends, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

God elevated Jesus to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Remember what Jesus said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. I am the Bright Morning Star. I am coming soon, and I am bringing my reward with Me, to repay all people according to their deeds.”

We say [in response], “Amen, Lord Jesus. Amen! We look forward to your return! May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with us while we wait.”⁵²

⁵¹ *Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14*

⁵² *Revelation 22:12, 13, 16, 20, 21*

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