

JESUS

THE LIFE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD | WEEK SIX

HOLY WEEK



EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

Today we're looking at the final five days before Jesus was crucified. These days form the first five days of what Christians call **Holy Week**.

Holy Week was packed with emotion and action—huge crowds, bold teaching, rising tension, and even betrayal by someone close to Jesus. Everyone could tell things were coming to a breaking point between Jesus and the religious leaders.

How would you rank the top moments in the ministry of Jesus? He did so many amazing things and taught so many profound truths that it's impossible to rank them in order by importance. This eight-week study will work through some of the highlights of Jesus' ministry, culminating in His death and resurrection.

Something big was about to happen. The question was: What? Would Jesus use His amazing power to stop His enemies? Or would they finally arrest Him and win?

What actually happened surprised everyone—except Jesus.

As we walk through Holy Week together, remember this: these events are the very heart of the Christian faith. They didn't just change history—they changed the world. And when we really understand what they mean, they'll change our hearts too.

Palm Sunday - His arrival as king

All four Gospels tell us about this amazing day—the day Jesus finally rode into Jerusalem in a big, public, can't-miss-it way. This wasn't a quiet visit. This was a royal entrance. Let's read what happened in **John 12:12-19**.

Jerusalem was buzzing with excitement on Palm Sunday. Jesus was famous by now. Huge crowds had heard Him teach. Sick people had been healed. Incredible miracles had happened right in front of their eyes—including the recent raising of Lazarus from the tomb in front of a crowd less than two miles away!

Everyone was talking about Jesus, and the excitement was at an all-time high.





Jerusalem was a special city. Long ago, King David made it the capital city of Israel. In Bible times, when a powerful king arrived in a city, people threw celebrations. They lined the streets, waved things in the air, and shouted as loud as they could. That's exactly what the crowd did as Jesus came in. They welcomed Him like a new king. Think of it like a **Super Bowl victory parade**—only louder and way more meaningful!

But not everyone was cheering.

The more popular Jesus became, the angrier the religious leaders grew. They were scared of His influence and hated that so many people followed Him. They decided they couldn't let Him keep going. They felt there was only one option left: *He had to be killed.*

But here's the twist: **neither group really understood Jesus.**

The **crowds** wanted a powerful king, not a Savior who would suffer and die.

The **religious leaders** thought killing Jesus would stop Him for good.

But they were all about to discover something shocking. God's plan was bigger, deeper, and more powerful than anyone imagined—and it was only just beginning.

Monday & Tuesday - Conflict in the temple

Once Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, He spent His days teaching people at the Temple—the building King Herod had recently remodeled with a courtyard that stretched a mile long! This thing was huge, shiny, beautiful, and the center of worship, learning, and Jewish religious life.

But what Jesus did first at the temple shocked everybody. Let's read **Luke 19:45-48**.

I bet you can imagine how that made the Jewish religious leaders feel! They were furious, so they sent spies to trap Jesus with their toughest questions. Questions like: "Should we pay taxes to evil Rome?" or "Is there really physical life after death?" They weren't genuinely curious—they were just trying to trap Jesus into saying something wrong so they could prove He wasn't from God.

But all day long, Monday and Tuesday, Jesus knocked each and every question out of the park! You could see the steam coming out of the Jewish leaders' ears! They got more and more jealous, angry, and embarrassed. 😡

But the thing that made them the angriest was what started it all: when Jesus said, "You've turned this Temple into a **den of thieves**." That wasn't a random insult. Jesus was actually quoting an Old Testament prophet named **Jeremiah**.

Back in Jeremiah's time, the religious leaders were taking advantage of the poor and then going into the Temple like it was their hiding place (a "den") where God would never judge them. So, Jeremiah had the *awful* job of announcing that God would destroy the Temple. Nobody wanted to hear that. Nobody liked that post. In fact, Jeremiah was arrested just for saying it. But sadly, it came true when the Babylonians destroyed the Temple a few years later in 586 BC.

Now Jesus was saying the same thing again. He warned that the Temple would be destroyed—and people would be driven out of it—because the leaders were corrupt. And, just like in Jeremiah's day, people did not want to hear it. And, just like Jeremiah, Jesus was right.

33 years later, the Romans began a four-year siege of Jerusalem! In the end, the Romans crucified so many Jews that the ring of crosses encircled the city. And then they demolished the Temple—and it has never been rebuilt.



TEMPLES ARE PLACES TO CONNECT WITH A HIGHER POWER. SOME PEOPLE ALSO TRY USING CRYSTALS, MAGIC, SPELLS, DRUGS, ETC. TO CONNECT TO THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. BUT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS OUR TEMPLE. WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT MEANS?

That's a sad ending, but here's the amazing part: it actually gives us incredible hope. Because of what Jesus did during Holy Week—because He gave His life as the ultimate sacrifice for us—we don't need a Temple building anymore to be close to God. Through Jesus, God comes to us directly with His grace and forgiveness!

Once again, the religious leaders thought they were stopping Jesus. But instead, God used it to make Jesus' impact even greater—and His hope available to the whole world.

Wednesday - His preparation for death

Things had blown up. The Jewish leaders were beyond angry and wanted Jesus gone—but they had a problem. They couldn't just grab Him in front of the crowds. They needed the right opportunity. And it came on **Wednesday**. Let's read what happened in **Mark 14:1-11**.

No one really got what was going on that week:

- The **disciples** felt confident and excited. Jesus had entered Jerusalem with a huge cheering crowd and completely outsmarted the religious leaders. It looked like Jesus was winning.
- The **religious leaders** were scared. They worried Jesus might start a rebellion, like other so-called "Messiahs" had done before, and that Rome would punish everyone.
- **Judas** either believed Jesus had gone too far in opposing the Jewish leaders, or he was trying to force Jesus to use His power. Whatever the reason, he was wrong.

But right in the middle of all this confusion, one woman understood something that others didn't.

She came to Jesus and poured an entire jar of extremely expensive perfume on Him. It may very well have been **the most valuable thing she owned**. It was her way of saying, "You are more important than anything else."

Jesus responded by saying her gift had an even deeper meaning. He reminded everyone why He had come to Jerusalem—not to lead a revolution of worldly power (as an anointed Messiah-King), but to be betrayed, to suffer, to die, and to be buried. Dead bodies start stinking quickly, so in ancient times, people put good-smelling oils and spices on bodies to prepare them for **burial**. Jesus said that's how God was using this woman's gift.

That's incredible. In the middle of all the drama, Jesus knew what was really going on. Nothing distracted Him. Nothing surprised Him. Nothing got Him off course. He stayed completely **focused** on His mission—to give His life for us.



Thursday - His last supper

It was time. Everything had come to a head. And Jesus knew it. He knew He had one more evening with His disciples before everything would change. How would you spend your last meal with your friends? I'm guessing you wouldn't do what Jesus did in **John 13:1-5**.

Jerusalem is a dry and dusty area, much like Phoenix. People wore sandals, so their feet weren't always the most pleasant thing to be around. And yet, Jesus took on the role of a household servant and stooped down to wash the feet of all His disciples—including **Judas**! Why? Jesus was showing why He came to earth: to serve us. To wash us clean. To lower Himself to death, so we could have a new, refreshed life in God's grace.

We can understand why Peter at first refused to let Jesus wash his feet. It didn't make sense for a great King to humble Himself to such a gross position. But Jesus said it had to happen. **We all need to be washed clean by Jesus.**

And then Jesus said, "Go and do the same thing for others." That's why this day is called Maundy Thursday. The word "Maundy" comes from the Latin word *mandatum* which means command—like a mandate. Jesus said, "Now I am giving you a new command: love each other as I have loved you."

Right here in the middle of all the hype, Jesus wanted His disciples to know that sacrificial love for others is what really matters. And Jesus knew it wasn't going to be easy. He knew His disciples would be persecuted for that kind of love. He knew the world would not accept the truth about Him. So, He did two things for His disciples: a meal and a prayer.

THE ULTIMATE HOPE JESUS GIVES

A MEAL & A PRAYER

Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the **Passover** meal. God had told His people to eat this special meal every year and retell the story of how He rescued them from slavery in Egypt. This was the most important moment in Israel's history—when God saved them, made them His people, and started leading them toward the Promised Land. It was their **Independence Day**.

So, during Passover, Jewish families remembered the different parts of their rescue story:

- the bitter herbs: they endured awful years of bitter slavery in Egypt
- the flat bread: they left Egypt so fast there wasn't time for bread to rise
- the lamb's blood: they sacrificed a lamb so that God's judgment would pass over them

So, at the meal that Thursday, everyone expected Jesus to say something like, "This bread and wine remind us of what God did long ago in Egypt." But Jesus surprised everyone. He said, "This is **my** body. This is **my** blood, given for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of **me**."

Jesus was saying the Passover story was pointing to **Him**. This is what Christians call **Communion**. Every time we eat the bread and drink from the cup, we remember that Jesus is our true Lamb. His sacrifice frees us from the slavery of sin. And even more amazing—Jesus promises to be **with us** in Communion, His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine! He brings us forgiveness, grace, and mercy. Because it's all about how Jesus had freed us!

And then, after the meal, Jesus did something else powerful—He prayed.

He prayed a long, emotional prayer for His disciples—and for us. It's the longest single speech from Jesus we have in the whole Bible. He prayed for protection, truth, courage, and unity. He knew life would be difficult, and He said it honestly: "*In this world you will have trouble.*" But He didn't stop there. Jesus also said, "*Take heart! I have overcome the world.*"

Right before the darkest moments were about to begin, Jesus was praying for His disciples, including **you and me**. That means no matter how hard or scary life feels, Jesus is with us—praying for us, loving us, and showing up with His never-giving-up grace.

The honest truth: sometimes we praise Jesus like a king—like the crowds did, and sometimes we fail Him—like His disciples did. That's why every one of them wondered if they would be the one to betray Him (Matthew 26:22). They knew what we often miss: we're not as strong as we think we are.

But our hope isn't in how strong we are. Our hope is in **how strong Jesus is**.

Jesus didn't fail. He didn't give up. Everything He did—from the cheers of Palm Sunday to the quiet meal on Thursday—was to give us grace. And that's why this week is so incredible. Every moment was leading to the cross... and to God's rescue plan for the world.



TODAY'S MAIN TAKEAWAY: THE EVENTS OF HOLY WEEK WERE CHARGED WITH HIGH DRAMA AND STRESS. THROUGH IT ALL, JESUS STAYED FOCUSED ON HIS MISSION: TO DIE AS A SACRIFICE FOR ALL PEOPLE.