

EASTER 2026

“Hard Fought Halleluiah”

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.....I will fear no evil” (Psalm 23)

-Jesus conquered death and the grave!!

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHO FOLLOWS MARCH MADNESS?

FINAL FOUR TEAMS: Saturday Night (2 games)

MONDAY NIGHT: Championship Game!!!

-NCAA Brackets! (GUESS)

Song: “We both know who wins this fight”

-I went with loyalty!

-Anyone but DUKE! (Peggy’s favorite team)

FOR ALL TEAMS.....YOU DON’T JUST GET THERE!

-IT IS A LONG ROAD!!! (HARD FOUGHT BATTLES)

-UPS AND DOWNS (THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY)

-DISCIPLINE & DEVOTION!

-VICTORY DOES NOT JUST HAPPEN

To ignore the hard work and battles to get to a championship would diminish the victory!

EASTER IS FAR BEYOND ANY CHAMPIONSHIP GAME!

TODAY WE CELEBRATE VICTORY!! BUT IT CAME WITH A PRICE!

-If we diminish the price.....we diminish the victory!

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

1 Corinthians 6:20 AND 7:23 both say “you were bought at a price.”

1 Peter 1:18-19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

THERE WAS A PRICE TO BE PAID!

JUST LIKE FINAL 4 CHAMPIONSHIP HAS AN ENTIRE BACKSTORY.....

.....MANY SEASONS LEADING UP TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP!

Quick look at the “Holy Week” THE BACKSTORY

HISTORY: The Day that starts off the HOLY WEEK of Easter!

-Friday....Jesus goes to Bethany to be with Lazarus, Mary & Martha

-Saturday was the Sabbath....Jesus rested

-Sun....PALM SUNDAY.....Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a Donkey

-Crowds gathered and worshiped him..... “HERE IS OUR KING”

John 12:12-18 The Triumphal Entry

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the King of Israel!” ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, ¹⁵ “Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.” ¹⁶ At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

***ONLY AFTER JESUS WAS GLORIFIED!!**

(not glorified in this triumphant entry!)

-They were seeing a prophecy fulfilled before their very eyes!

Zechariah 9:9 The Coming of Zion's King ⁹ Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

-Hundreds of years before, the Scriptures foretold of a Ruler

-Whose Kingdom would never end

-One who would bless all nations and lead all nations.

So everyone there thought "THIS IS IT" OUR KING IS HERE!

NO ONE (except Jesus)

HAD A CLUE THE BATTLES THIS WEEK WOULD BRING

PICKING UP THE TEXT RIGHT AFTER THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.....

John 12:19-28 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!" ²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³ Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it

remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷ “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.” ²⁸ **Father, glorify your name!**” Then a voice came from heaven, **“I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”**

EVERYONE WAS CELEBRATING.....

...BUT JESUS KNEW THE HARD FOUGHT BATTLES TO COME!

AGAIN.....HISTORY: The Day that starts off the HOLY WEEK of Easter!

-Friday....Jesus goes to Bethany to be with Lazarus, Mary & Martha

-Saturday was the Sabbath....Jesus rested

-Sun....Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a Donkey.....

-Crowds gathered and worshiped him..... “HERE IS OUR KING”

-Mon....Jesus curses the Fig tree & clears the temple

I CALL THIS “HANGRY MONDAY” There was a HOLY ANGER brewing!

Mark 11:12-18 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³ Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. **He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,** ¹⁶ **and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.** ¹⁷ And as he taught

them, he said, “Is it not written: “‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY were 2 days of controversy and parables
-Jesus teaches and tells parables and avoids being trapped in his words by the Priests.

-RIGHT OFF THE BAT..... The Authority of Jesus Questioned

Matthew 21:23 Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. **“By what authority are you doing these things?”** they asked. **“And who gave you this authority?”**

Matthew 21 – 25 (JESUS HAD A HEAVY DAY OF TEACHING)

Parable of the 2 Sons working in the vineyard (about accepting his message)

Parable of the tenants (man owns a vineyard...sends his son....they kill him for the inheritance)

Parable of the wedding banquet (King threw a wedding banquet, but many decided not to come)

Teaching on paying taxes to Caesar (TRAP...give to Caesar what is Caesar...God what is Gods)

Teaching on Marriage and resurrection (TRAP....teaches about the resurrection of the dead)

Teaching on the greatest commandment (TRAP....Love God, Love People)

Teaching on whose son is the Christ (TRAP....about being called “The Son of David”)

Matt 23: THE SEVEN WOES (Jesus nailed them on everything!)

THEN: MATT 24 THE OLIVET DISCOURSE.....

.....(a mile long ridge east of Jerusalem...200 feet above the city)

Signs of the end of the age (End times and the 2nd coming of Christ)

The day and the hour unknown (keep watch...be ready for his return)

The parable of the 10 virgins (waiting for bridegroom.....5 had oil, 5 did not...be ready)

The parable of the talents (5,2,1....what you do while he is gone.....well done good & faithful)

Teaching on the sheep and the goats (sheep follow....goats are fighters)

THURSDAY.... PASSOVER FEAST! (Celebrated for 1400 years)

- ❖ Peter and John sent to make preparation for Passover meal
- ❖ After sunset, eats meal with the twelve; washes disciples; Judas departs
- ❖ Lord's Supper instituted
- ❖ To Garden of Gethsemane; Jesus' agony
- ❖ Betrayal by Judas; arrest by Sanhedrin
- ❖ To house of High Priest as Sanhedrin is convened; Peter betrays Jesus

WITHIN 24 HOURS HE WOULD BE DEAD.....

THE DISCIPLES STILL DIDN'T GET IT!

-This was not a NORMAL Passover celebration!!

FRIDAY.....Jesus carried his cross, beaten, humiliated and was crucified

THE NEXT 24 HOURS SHOWED THE INHUMANE WAYS OF THE WORLD!

THE STAIRS.....THE ROAD TO GLORY!

One of my most sacred memories of Jerusalem!

-This is the ancient stairs called “The Southern Steps” or “The Rabbi Stairs”

-They led from the Kidron Valley to the Temple

-Top of the steps was the house of Caiaphas (the high priest).

JESUS WALKED DOWN THESE STEPS OF HIS OWN FREE WILL!

-Heading to the Garden to Pray!

-Jesus knew the price that needed to be paid!

Greatest prayer of submission in History!

Luke 22:42 “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

Luke 22:44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Minutes later Jesus was betrayed and arrested!

-Brought to the High Priest Caiaphas (at the top of the stairs)

JESUS WAS LEAD UP THESE SAME STEPS OF HIS OWN FREE WILL!

John 10:17-18 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

John 12:27-28 “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.” ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

Philippians 2:6-11 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

-Jesus conquered Death and the Grave!

Hebrews 2:9 But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

REVELATION 5:9 “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

Acts 4:12. “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

WAGES: WHAT I HAVE EARNED.....IS DEATH

BUT: THE GIFT OF GOD.....IS ETERNAL LIFE!

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

-A GIFT FOR EVERYONE TO RECEIVE!

PRAYER:

GOD I THANK YOU

FOR SENDING YOUR SON JESUS, INTO THIS WORLD

TO BE THE SACRIFICE FOR MY SINS

I THANK YOU, FOR GOING TO THE CROSS

AND GIVING UP YOUR LIFE

TODAY I PUT MY TRUST IN YOU

I REALIZE THAT I AM IN NEED OF A SAVIOR

AND TODAY I ASK YOU

TO BE THE LORD OF MY LIFE

AND THE KING OF MY HEART

IN JESUS NAME.....AMEN

Luke 15:10 “I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

NEXT:

MOST POWERFUL PRAYER OF YOUR LIFE!!!

-Find a bible & find church!

-QR CODE

-PRAYER TEAMS

The road to victory went through a pretty treacherous path!

Hebrews 4:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

JESUS PAVED THE WAY! HE WENT THROUGH IT ALL!

PRAYER:

SONG: Hard fought hallelujah!