

Palm & Easter Sunday - March 29, 2026

Video Online Bible Study with Rev. Gary E. Mathiesen

“Tell Me Something Good”

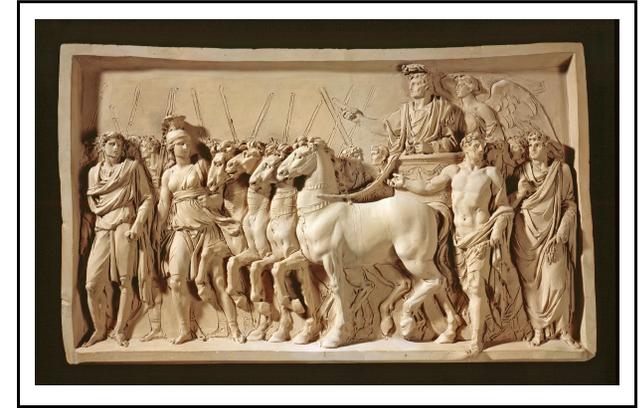
~ Grounding Ourselves in the Good News of Lent ~ “The Good News Is ... Inspiring Us to Act/Alive In The World”

Mark 11:1-11; Matthew 28:1-10

NOTES ON THE TEXT FOR PALM SUNDAY ~ Mark 11:1-11 ~ “THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM”

~ THE TWO PROCESSIONS INTO JERUSALEM ~

☞ There were two processions entering Jerusalem on a spring day in the year 30 AD. One was a peasant procession, the other an imperial procession. † From the east, Jesus rode a donkey down the Mount of Olives, cheered by his followers. Jesus was from the peasant village of Nazareth, his message was about the kingdom of God, and his followers came from the peasant class. They had journeyed to Jerusalem from Galilee, about a hundred miles to the north. On the opposite side of the city, from the west, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, entered the city at the head of a column of Imperial Cavalry and soldiers. Jesus’ procession proclaimed the kingdom of God; Pilate’s proclaimed the power of empire. The two processions embody the central conflict of the week that led to Jesus’ crucifixion.



~ THE IMPERIAL PROCESSION INTO JERUSALEM ~

☞ It was the standard practice of the Roman governors of Judea to be in Jerusalem during major festivals, not because they cared about their Jewish subjects, but to handle business in case of trouble. Pilate normally lived along the eastern Mediterranean Sea in Caesarea Maritima (a harbor city built by Herod the Great) but he had brought his soldiers in to reinforce the Fortress Antonia - a fortress built alongside Herod’s temple area as a way to monitor the local population (see addendum “Fort Antonia” for artist’s conception of temple area).

☞ Traditionally, Pilate paraded into Jerusalem on the first day of Passover Week by entering the west gate – the front gate – with legions of chariots, horses, and foot soldiers, dressed for battle and armed with swords and spears. Message to citizens: Rome's authority would not be questioned.

☞ Pilate represented The Pax Romana (Roman Peace) - period of 200 years (beginning with the reign of Augustus Caesar/Octavius 27 BC - and ending with Marcus Aurelius 180 AD); increased and sustained Roman imperialism (as the Roman army expanded its territorial gains through an expanded professional military and regional warfare); relative peace and order (brought by heavy handed oppression and squashing all dissent); prosperous stability (through taxation of its citizens); ruling/dominance of absolute power (showing political favoritism and unquestioning loyalty), and regional expansion (all conquered territories or provinces must pledge total allegiance to Caesar). Romans regarded peace not as an absence of war, but as a rare situation which existed when all opponents had been beaten down and lost the ability to resist (about 10-20% of population were slaves composed of conquered people).

☞ Pilate was making a show of Imperial theology (propaganda promoting political power). The emperor was not just viewed as the ruler of Rome, but also declared to be the son of a god. It began with Augustus who ruled from 31 BC to 14 AD. His adoptive father Julius Caesar was said (posthumously) to be a god. Inscriptions (ex. on coins) refer to Augustus as son of god, lord, savior, and one who had “brought peace on earth.” His successors had continued to

take on the divine titles.

~ THE SETTING ~

☞ This entry into Jerusalem by Jesus marks the beginning of Passion/Holy Week which culminates in the resurrection story of Easter Sunday (see addendum/chart “The Life of Christ: The Last Week”).

☞ As we move into Passion/Holy Week, Jesus’ presence sparks deep debate about who he is: a prophet? An imposter? The Messiah (Christ)? A rabbi/teacher? Jesus’ authority is questioned time after time by every political and theological persuasion of the day: the chief priests, teachers of the law, elders, Pharisees, Herodians and Sadducees (see Mk 11:27; 12:12,13,18; 14:114:43, 53-65; 15:1; see also addendum “Jewish Sects”).

☞ This is a new section in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus arrives in Jerusalem and mostly remains in the city - principally at or near the Temple area - for the rest of his ministry.



~ THE PEASANT PROCESSION INTO JERUSALEM ~

☞ v. 1 “*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives ...*” Jesus and his disciples, after a journey up the hill from Jericho, stop at small villages outside Jerusalem. (See map “Passion Week”) The Mount of Olives is directly east of Jerusalem, it rises to a height of about 2,700 feet, some 200 feet higher than Mount Zion. Many of the details of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem fulfill the messages of the prophets (see Zech. 14:4; Mal. 3:1).

☞ v. 2 “*Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden.*” Unused animals were regarded as especially valuable for religious purposes. (See Num. 19:2; Deut 21:3; I Sam 6:7)

☞ v. 2b, 3 “*Untie it and bring it here ... if anyone asks you ... the Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.*” The comment from Jesus seems directed at anyone who may question the disciples and not meant necessarily for the owner. “*The LORD ...*” This could be a claim from Jesus to be God but the more fitting sense could be a claim Jesus makes about himself as the Lord of Israel (a claim people have made about Jesus; See Mtt 8:2, 21; 9:28; Lk 18:41; 19:8; Jn 9:38)

☞ vv. 4-6 “*They went and found a colt ... as they untied it, some people standing there asked, ‘What are you doing , untying that colt?’ [The disciples] answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.*” Miraculous? Perhaps. The reputation of Jesus was widely known, so it might have simply been an honor to give Jesus access to this colt from a small village.

☞ vv. 7-8 “*When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.*”

☞ Riding a donkey/colt - Jesus had planned this counter-procession in advance. We know this by his sending his disciples on ahead toward Jerusalem to

secure a colt and bring it to Jesus for him to ride into Jerusalem. This is in reference to the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 - “See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

☞ In placing their “*cloaks*” on the colt and road, the disciples/people were giving Jesus “the royal treatment” (King Jehu was given similar honor at his makeshift coronation; 2 Kings 9:13). Laying garments on the ground was a sign of respect and, in this context, an acknowledgment of Jesus as the King of Kings.

☞ People spontaneously gathered “*branches*” from alongside the road to place before Jesus as he passed by. John records the detail that the branches they cut were from palm trees (John 12:13).

☞ vv. 9-10 “*Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!”*”

“*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*”

“*Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!*”

“*Hosanna in the highest heaven!*”

☞ Quotes and references to Zechariah 9:9 (king riding on a donkey) and Psalm 118 (shouts from the crowd) are used to indicate that everything that happened was within the scope of God’s plan/direction. Events happen exactly as told by Jesus.

☞ v. 11a “*Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the Temple.*” Many commentators call attention to the fact that Jesus’ actual entrance is barely mentioned. In fact, it is the sub-text to the reaction/response of the crowd ... making the accolades of the crowd the focal point thus placing the reader into the crowd. How will we join in?

☞ v. 11b “*He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.*” Anticlimactic. It almost makes the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem a non-event. Calling this entrance into Jerusalem “triumphant” might be overreach!

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION ...

1. “Hosanna” is an Aramaic expression that could be translated to “Save us!” If you find yourself also wanting to cry out and shout this prayer today, what compels you to do so?
2. What does the Good News inspire you to do? What actions can you take in response to the Good News? How does the Good News move you?
3. As you head into Holy Week, how will you put Jesus’ teachings into practice?

Bethany, the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem

4. Clearing of the temple
MONDAY
 Mt 21:12-17;
 Mk 11:15-18;
 Lk 19:45-48

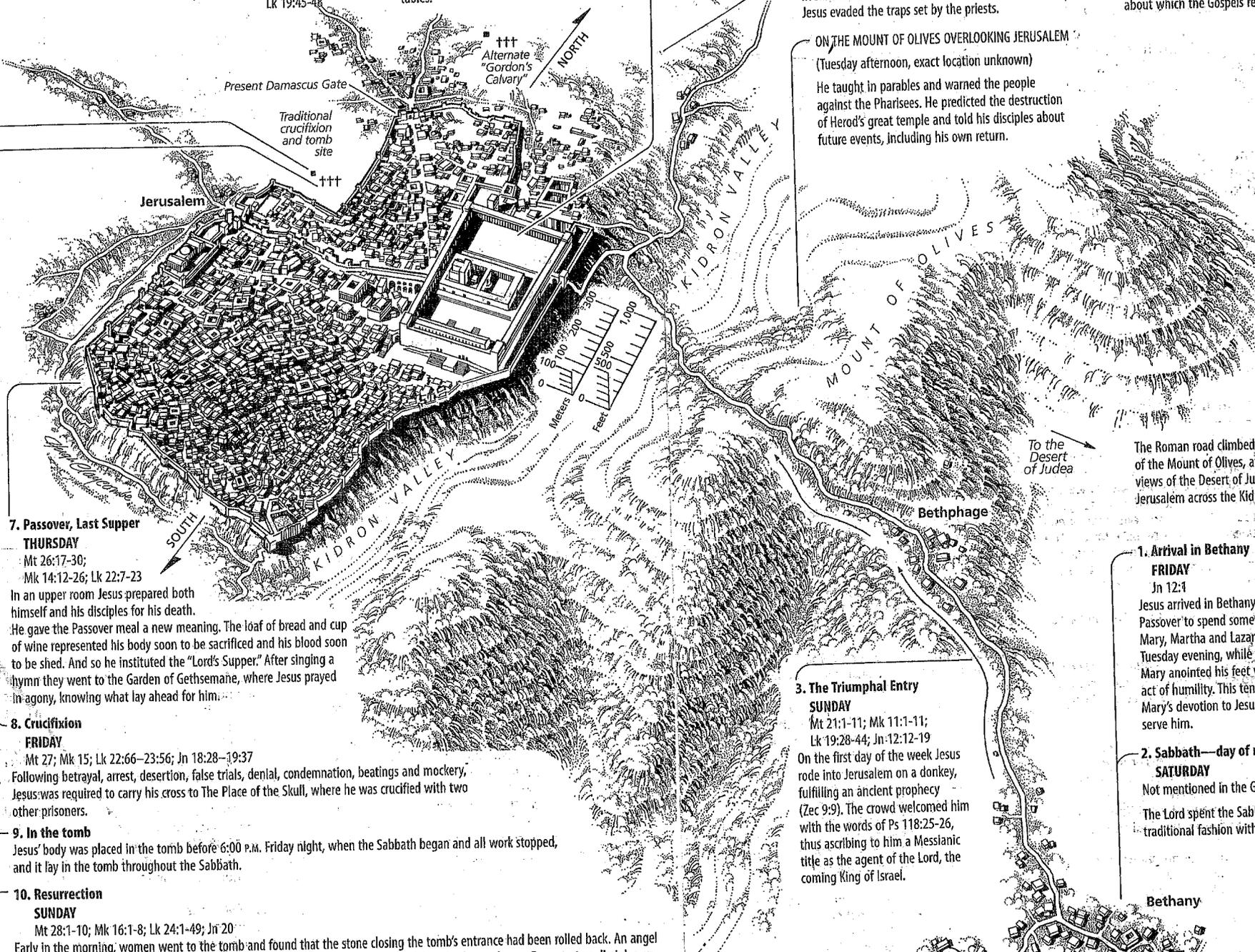
Jesus returned to the temple and found the court of the Gentiles full of traders and money changers making a large profit. Jesus drove them out and overturned their benches and tables.

5. Day of controversy and parables
TUESDAY
 Mt 21:23-24:51; Mk 11:27-13:37; Lk 20:1-21:36

IN JERUSALEM
 Jesus evaded the traps set by the priests.

ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES OVERLOOKING JERUSALEM
 (Tuesday afternoon, exact location unknown)
 He taught in parables and warned the people against the Pharisees. He predicted the destruction of Herod's great temple and told his disciples about future events, including his own return.

6. Day of rest
WEDNESDAY
 Although the Gospels do not mention this day, the counting of the days (Mk 14:1; Jn 12:1) seems to indicate that there was another day about which the Gospels record nothing.



7. Passover, Last Supper
THURSDAY
 Mt 26:17-30;
 Mk 14:12-26; Lk 22:7-23

In an upper room Jesus prepared both himself and his disciples for his death. He gave the Passover meal a new meaning. The loaf of bread and cup of wine represented his body soon to be sacrificed and his blood soon to be shed. And so he instituted the "Lord's Supper." After singing a hymn they went to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed in agony, knowing what lay ahead for him.

8. Crucifixion
FRIDAY

Mt 27; Mk 15; Lk 22:66-23:56; Jn 18:28-19:37
 Following betrayal, arrest, desertion, false trials, denial, condemnation, beatings and mockery, Jesus was required to carry his cross to The Place of the Skull, where he was crucified with two other prisoners.

9. In the tomb

Jesus' body was placed in the tomb before 6:00 P.M. Friday night, when the Sabbath began and all work stopped, and it lay in the tomb throughout the Sabbath.

10. Resurrection
SUNDAY

Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-49; Jn 20
 Early in the morning, women went to the tomb and found that the stone closing the tomb's entrance had been rolled back. An angel told them Jesus was alive and gave them a message. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden, to Peter, to two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

3. The Triumphal Entry
SUNDAY
 Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-11;
 Lk 19:28-44; Jn 12:12-19

On the first day of the week Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling an ancient prophecy (Zec 9:9). The crowd welcomed him with the words of Ps 118:25-26, thus ascribing to him a Messianic title as the agent of the Lord, the coming King of Israel.

1. Arrival in Bethany
FRIDAY
 Jn 12:1

Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover to spend some time with his friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. On the following Tuesday evening, while Jesus was still in Bethany, Mary anointed his feet with costly perfume as an act of humility. This tender expression indicated Mary's devotion to Jesus and her willingness to serve him.

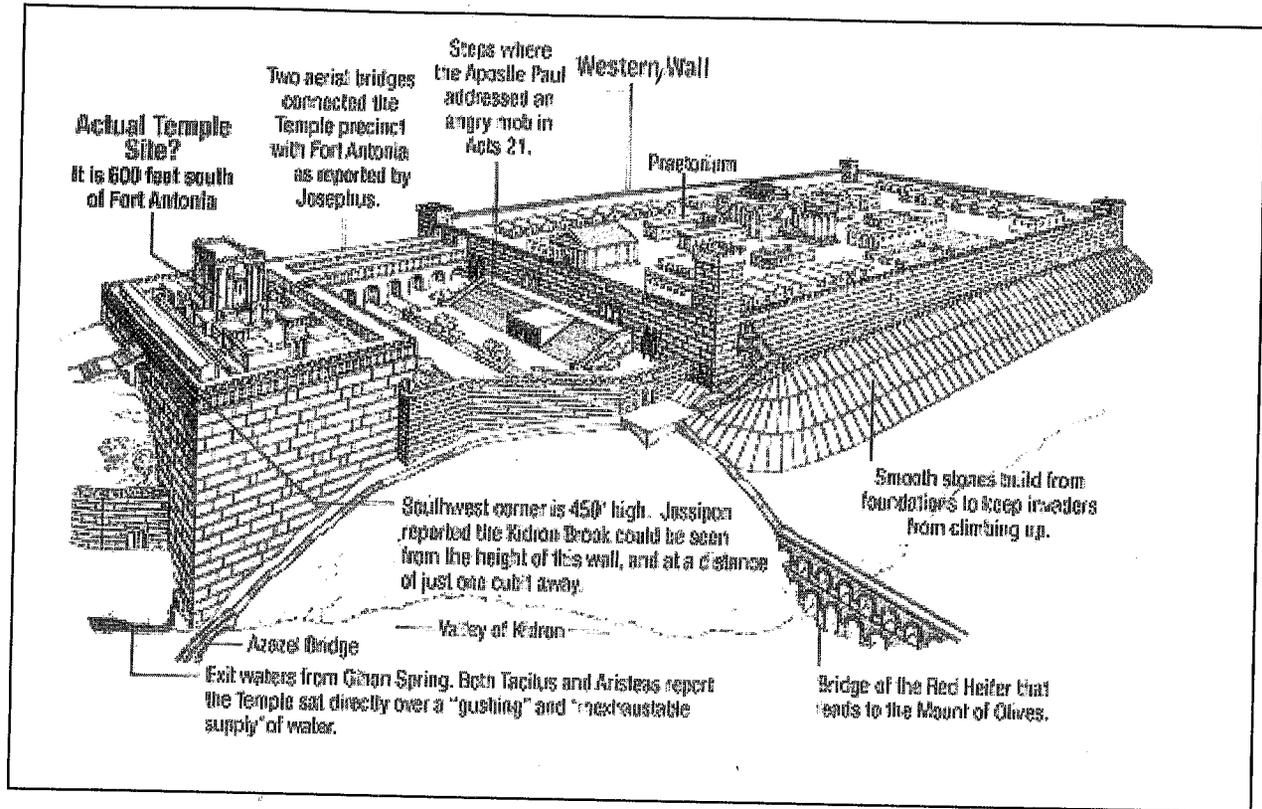
2. Sabbath—day of rest
SATURDAY
 Not mentioned in the Gospels.

The Lord spent the Sabbath day in traditional fashion with his friends.

The Roman road climbed steeply to the crest of the Mount of Olives, affording spectacular views of the Desert of Judea to the east and of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley to the west.

Bethany

FORT ANTONIA



Jesus begins his last trip to Jerusalem

A.D. 30
Lk 17:11

Jesus blesses the little children

ACROSS THE JORDAN
Mt 19:13-15; Mk 10:13-16; Lk 18:15-17

Jesus talks to the rich young man

ACROSS THE JORDAN
Mt 19:16-30; Mk 10:17-31; Lk 18:18-30

Jesus again predicts his death and resurrection

NEAR THE JORDAN
Mt 20:17-19; Mk 10:32-34; Lk 18:31-34

Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus

JERICHO
Mt 20:29-34; Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43

Jesus talks to Zacchaeus

JERICHO
Lk 19:1-10

Jesus returns to Bethany to visit
Mary and Martha

BETHANY
Jn 11:55-12:1

THE LAST WEEK

The **Triumphal Entry**, JERUSALEM, Sunday
Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-10; Lk 19:29-44; Jn 12:12-19

Jesus curses the fig tree, Monday
Mt 21:18-19; Mk 11:12-14

Jesus clears the temple, Monday
Mt 21:12-13; Mk 11:15-18

The authority of Jesus questioned, Tuesday
Mt 21:23-27; Mk 11:27-33; Lk 20:1-8

Jesus teaches in the temple, Tuesday
Mt 21:28-23:39; Mk 12:1-44; Lk 20:9-21:4

Jesus anointed, BETHANY, Tuesday
Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:2-11

The plot against Jesus, Wednesday
Mt 26:14-16; Mk 14:10-11; Lk 22:3-6

The Last Supper, Thursday
Mt 26:17-29; Mk 14:12-25; Lk 22:7-20; Jn 13:1-38

Jesus comforts the disciples, Thursday
Jn 14:1-16:33

Gethsemane, Thursday
Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:40-46

Jesus' arrest and trial, Thursday night and Friday
Mt 26:47-27:26; Mk 14:43-15:15;
Lk 22:47-23:25; Jn 18:2-19:16

Jesus' crucifixion and death, GOLGOTHA, Friday
Mt 27:27-56; Mk 15:16-41;
Lk 23:26-49; Jn 19:17-30

The burial of Jesus, JOSEPH'S TOMB, Friday
Mt 27:57-66; Mk 15:42-47;
Lk 23:50-56; Jn 19:31-42

30

WINTER

A.D.

31

SPRING

SUMMER

FALL

WINTER

SPRING

SUMMER

AFTER THE RESURRECTION

The empty tomb, JERUSALEM, Sunday
Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-10

Mary Magdalene sees Jesus in the garden
JERUSALEM, Sunday
Mt 16:9-11; Jn 20:11-18

Jesus appears to the two going to Emmaus
Sunday
Mk 16:12-13; Lk 24:13-35

Jesus appears to 10 disciples
JERUSALEM, Sunday
Mk 16:14; Lk 24:36-43; Jn 20:19-25

Jesus appears to the 11 disciples
JERUSALEM, One week later
Jn 20:26-31

Jesus talks with some of his disciples
SEA OF GALILEE, One week later
Jn 21:1-25

Jesus ascends to his Father in Heaven
MT OF OLIVES, 40 days later
Mt 28:16-20; Mk 16:19-20; Lk 24:44-53

Jesus raises
Lazarus from
the dead

BETHANY
Winter, A.D. 30
Jn 11:1-44