



Enter the Story

One Week to Live

A narrative about the final week of Jesus' life.

THE BIBLE

Matthew 21-26, Mark 10-14
Luke 19-22, John 11-17

Prepare for the Story

ICEBREAKER

- If you only had one week to live, what would you do with the time you had left?

Rewind the Story

Can someone highlight what has happened in the story so far ...

- Hope & Healing – The mission of Jesus
- Miracles - Jesus' ability to perform wonders
- Kingdom Ways – The nature of the Kingdom of God
- No Ordinary Man – Supernatural experiences with Jesus

Hear the Story

Scene One: The Sanhedrin

After Jesus brought His friend Lazarus back from the dead, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and Martha believed in Him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

Then, the chief priests and the Pharisees called an emergency meeting of the Sanhedrin. *“What are we accomplishing?”* they asked. *“Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away what little power and privilege we have left.”*

Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was the High Priest, spoke up, *“Don’t you know anything? Can’t you see that it’s to our advantage that one man dies instead of the whole nation?”* So, from that day on, they plotted to take Jesus’ life.

Because of this, Jesus wasn’t able to move around publicly in Judea any longer. Instead, He withdrew to a region near the wilderness, where He stayed with His disciples.

Scene Two: The Journey to Jerusalem

When it was almost time for the Passover, Jesus gathered His disciples and set out for Jerusalem. On their journey, Jesus pulled the twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to Him. *“We are going up to Jerusalem,”* He said, *“and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles, who will mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him. Three days later, He will rise.”*

As they approached the city, they came to the area of Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives; Jesus sent two of His disciples with these instructions: *“Go into the village; as soon as you enter, you’ll find a colt tethered, one that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it back. If anyone asks, “What are you doing?” say, “The Master needs him and will return him shortly.”* They went and found a colt, just as Jesus told them they would. They brought the colt to Jesus, spread their coats on it, and He sat on it.

It was six days before Passover, and Jesus arrived in Bethany, where His friend Lazarus lived, the one He had raised from the dead. Here, a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served the guests while Lazarus was reclining at the table with Jesus. Then Mary appeared carrying a bottle of expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her hair. And the smell of the fragrant perfume filled the entire house.

But one of His disciples objected. It was Judas who said, *“Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth an entire year’s wages.”* He didn’t say this because he cared about the poor, but he said it because he cared about the money.

“Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. *“It was always planned that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. Remember, you will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”* Meanwhile, a large crowd, who had heard that Jesus was there, was gathering outside. They came to see Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well because of how many people started following Jesus because of him.

Scene Three: Triumphal Entry

The next day, the great crowd that had come for the Passover festival heard that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. 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!”*

Now, the crowd that was with Him when he raised Lazarus from the dead continued to spread the word, and many more people came out to meet Him. So the Pharisees said to one another, *“See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”* After entering Jerusalem, Jesus spent the remainder of the day in the temple, and when evening came, He returned with his disciples to Bethany.

Scene Four: Teaching in the Temple

The next morning, they arrived in Jerusalem once again, they went to the Temple. As they were walking, the high priests, religious scholars, and leaders came up and demanded, *“Show us your credentials. Who authorized you to speak and act like this?”*

Jesus responded, *“First, let me ask you a question. Answer it, and then I’ll present my credentials. About the baptism of John – who authorized it: heaven or humans? You tell me.”* They were caught on the spot and knew it. They pulled back into a huddle and whispered. *“If we say ‘heaven,’ he’ll ask us why we didn’t believe John; if we say ‘humans,’ we’ll be caught up in a riot because of all the people who view John as a prophet.”* They decided to concede, so they answered, *‘We don’t know.’* Jesus replied, *“Then I won’t tell you by what authority I do these things.”*

Each day, Jesus was teaching at the temple, answering people's questions. Many of Jesus' teachings pointed out the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. He said, *"When the Pharisees and teachers share with you God's commands, listen to them – but don't follow their example. They don't live out what they teach."*

These teachings infuriated the religious leaders. So, the High Priest met with them to discuss capturing Jesus and putting Him to death. *"We can't arrest him during Passover,"* they agreed, *"or it will create a huge riot."*

At this time, Satan entered Judas, one of the twelve disciples, and he went to the chief priest and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money in exchange for his cooperation. He agreed and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when a crowd wouldn't be present.

Scene Five: Passover

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John to make the preparations. When it was ready, Jesus and His twelve disciples met together in a home to celebrate the Passover. Jesus knew that the hour had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father.

Before the meal began, He got up from the table, tied a towel around His waist, and poured some water into a bowl. Then, He went to each of His disciples and washed their feet, wiping them with the towel. The disciples were shocked ... only hired servants were supposed to wash guests' feet! They wondered why He was doing this.

Jesus came to Peter, who said to Him, *"Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"* Jesus replied, *"You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."* *"No,"* Peter said, *"You shall never wash my feet."* Jesus replied, *"Unless I wash you, you have no part in me."* *"Then Lord,"* Peter replied, *"not just my feet but my hand and my head as well."*

After washing their feet, Jesus sat down and asked, *"Do you understand what I was doing? You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am. Since I have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."*

During the meal, Jesus picked up some bread, thanked God for it, and broke it into pieces. Giving it to his disciples, He said, *“Take this and eat it; this is My body given for you.”* Then Jesus picked up a cup of wine and thanked God for it. He gave them the cup and said, *“All of you drink this. It is My blood given for you – a new covenant between God and His people. It is poured out to forgive the sins of many. Remember me each time you eat and drink these things together.”*

After He said these things, Jesus became visibly upset, and he told them why. *“One of you is going to betray me.”* The disciples looked around at one another, wondering who He could have been talking about. Peter motioned to John, who was closest to Jesus, and said, *“Ask him who he means.”*

So, John asked Jesus. Jesus said to him, *“The one to whom I give this crust of bread after I’ve dipped it.”* Then, He dipped the crust and gave it to Judas. As soon as the bread was in his hand, Jesus said to Judas, *“What you must do, do it quickly.”* Judas left, and no one around the table knew why Jesus said this to him. Some thought Jesus sent Judas out to buy what they needed for the feast.

After Judas was gone, Jesus said, *“My children, I will only be with you a little longer. You are going to look high and low for me. But just as I told the Jews, I’m telling you: Where I go, you are not able to come.”* Then Peter spoke up, saying, *“Lord, where are you going?”* Jesus replied, *“Where I am going, you cannot follow, but you will follow me later.”*

Peter asked, *“Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”* Then Jesus answers, *“Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. When you see what happens tonight, you will all abandon me. It is part of God’s plan that I will be betrayed and die. But don’t fear; I will rise again from the dead!”*

Jesus continued to speak to them, saying, *“Now I am giving you a new commandment: Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for each other will prove to the world that you are My disciples.”*

The greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for each other. But you can’t do this on your own. You must remain in My love and obey what I have taught you. If you remain in Me, I will remain in you ... like branches connected to a vine ... if you remain in Me, you will produce much fruit. This will bring great joy to you and to God our Father!”

Then Jesus said, *"I will be leaving you soon, but God will send His Spirit, who will never leave you and who will guide you in all the ways of truth."* When they were finished with the Passover meal, after it had gotten dark, Jesus and His disciples went to the Mount of Olives to pray.

Retell the Story

- What was the crowds' reaction to Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead?
- What did the religious leaders decide to do because of this?
- What did Jesus do in response to this threat?
- What did Jesus tell the disciples as they questioned His choice to head to Jerusalem?
- What happened during the dinner at Bethany?
- What happened as Jesus entered Jerusalem?
- What did Jesus spend the week doing?
- Why were the religious leaders upset? What were they trying to do?
- What were they afraid of?
- What opportunity gave the religious leaders hope of getting rid of Jesus?
- Before the Passover meal, what did Jesus do?
- What was the disciples' reaction? What about Peter?
- What did Jesus say the bread and wine represented?
- What did Jesus predict at this meal?
- What did He tell His disciples they must do?

Discuss the Story

- What is your first reaction to this story? How did this story make you feel?
- What stood out to you from this story? What did you notice for the first time?
- What from this story made you wonder?

- Why do you think Jesus went into hiding?
- What do you think makes the religious leaders so desperate to get rid of Jesus?
- What do you think was Jesus' focus during His final week?
- Did you hear anything that reminded you of *other* stories?
- From this story, what did you notice about humans?
- From this story, what do you notice about God's character or His qualities?

Join the Story

1) JESUS' CHOICE

All Jesus had to do was lay low for a while, and the whole thing would likely have blown over. Make no mistake: Jesus chose this path. No one did this to Him. Review today's story and list where you see Jesus making a conscious choice to take this path. Because Jesus is God and He chose this, what does this tell you about our God (His character)? Where have you seen these characteristics of God before? What do they mean to you today?

2) RELIGIOUS DESPERATION

From our story, we can feel the desperation of the Pharisees, Chief Priests, and teachers of the law. They were willing to do anything to get rid of Jesus. Why do you think it's the 'religious people' that miss what God is doing through Jesus? How are the supposedly 'good people' actually the villains in the story? Do you think this happens today? How can someone who is 'religious' prevent this from happening to them?

3) WASHING FEET

In our story, the disciples are shocked when Jesus washes their feet. Why was it considered unusual for someone like Jesus to behave as a servant? How do you think this would work in our culture? What are some ways people can serve each other? How have people done that for you? How have you done that for others?

Pray

God,

When we think about Jesus' final week, we can't help but see the path that He chose ... the path that You chose. You could have gone a different way, but You chose this path. You lived a perfect life and showed us what it looks like to live in a way that honors You. May how we live this week, in the words we say and the things that we do, honor You in the same way that Jesus modeled for us. Amen.