

## THE WEEK THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

It's the old old story that just makes some people yawn. Don't fall for that. Jesus' life matters. The facts about Jesus Christ present an unparalleled historical reality. It's nothing less than divine intrusion into human history. It should make you sit up, take notice, and change your life. Be intentional this week about participating in church services, acknowledging Jesus as YOUR Lord and Savior.

The final chapters of the four Gospels record, in dramatic detail, the events of the week that changed the world. It was the climax of God's personal intervention into mankind's problem of sin and evil. Since the creation of the world, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into human existence, God had promised a "*seed of the woman*," a Savior, to make things right. At Christmas we celebrate the coming of this promised One, the incarnation of Christ, God becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ. The "Word" who was with God and was God and who made all things, became God "with us."

**1- PALM SUNDAY** - On this day we cry "*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.*" Jesus enters the holy city of Jerusalem for the Passover feast, intent on becoming the promised paschal lamb, to take away the sins of the world. His earthly ministry of the past three years presents Him as the Son of God, the miraculous fully human and fully divine man who would fulfill all the ancient prophecies. His impeccable life, amazing miracles, practical authoritative teachings, charismatic character, all combined in the popular mind to acclaim Him as the promised Messiah-Savior-Servant-Conquering- King.

**2- MID-WEEK** - On Monday, Jesus makes a barren fig tree an object lesson of Israel, which should have been bearing the fruit of repentance. He cleanses the temple in preparation for the sacrifice of Himself. Tuesday, Jesus explains the fig tree, teaches in the temple, and makes predictions about the future, including the impending destruction of Jerusalem, because the New Covenant will supercede the Old. Wednesday, the plot to kill Jesus takes shape. Everything is going according to God's definite plan.

**3- MAUNDY THURSDAY** - Christians gather in fellowship tonight because of all Jesus did that day. At their Passover feast, Jesus washes the disciples' feet, showing them how to be servant-leaders. He reminds them of His most important teachings, commanding them to love one another. "Maundy" relates to the Latin for commands. Jesus also speaks of His coming death and resurrection. And He institutes "The Lord's Supper" as He uses the tangible elements of bread and cup to represent His body and blood, given for them for the remission of sins, in fulfillment of the promised New Covenant. Believers receive new hearts, circumcised by the Holy Spirit, who regenerates them to faith and empowers them to obedience. But before the evening ends, Jesus predicts their denial. He prays for them. In Gethsemane, He submits to God the Father as the obedient Son, graciously giving His life to pay the penalty for our sins. Do YOU submit yourself to His will, trusting the totality of your being to the fullness of His grace ?

**4- GOOD FRIDAY** - This day we pause in somber reflection as Jesus is betrayed, arrested, sentenced. One by one, the earthly authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil, condemn Jesus to death. The crowds lauding Him as King days ago now shout, "*Crucify Him! We have no king but Caesar!*" Jesus is brutally scourged, forced to carry the cross-beam to Golgotha, and raised up on the terrible Roman tree of execution. In His own body, He carries our sins. By His stripes we are healed. The holy God turns His face away, as Jesus cries out, "*Tetelestai! It is finished! Paid in full!*" and His spirit leaves His body on the cross. The world goes dark, the curtain in the temple is rent, and the disciples huddle in despair. Two secret disciples go public, as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea place His body in a new tomb, as the women watch. Only later they realize how on this day, this Passover, Jesus was God's sacrifice for sin.

**5- EASTER SUNDAY** - On this day we rejoice in jubilant celebration. The Sabbath, Saturday, prevented the women from preparing His body for burial. Early Sunday morning they rush to the tomb, finding it empty. They are amazed at angels announcing, "*He is risen, just as He said.*" The women rush to inform the incredulous disciples. Then the resurrected Jesus appears in person to Mary, to Peter, to the disciples on the Emmaus road, and to those gathered in the upper room. Hallelujah! HE LIVES!

That's why Christians today still gather on Sunday. Jesus IS risen indeed! The promised one, our Creator, who came in a cradle to go to a cross, has obtained the crown of life. Sin could not overcome Him. Death could not defeat Him. The grave could not hold Him. The power of the Holy Spirit gives you HIS new life, as you receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, to be lived through you, as you trust and obey. He lives!