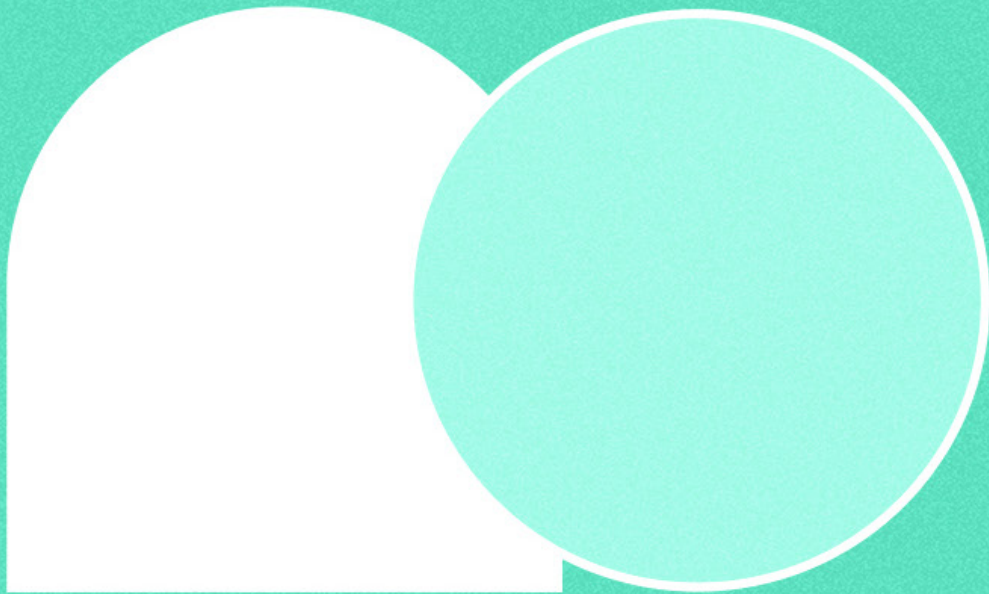


# connect

HE HAS  
RISEN!



REMEMBER HOW HE TOLD YOU, WHILE  
HE WAS STILL WITH YOU IN GALILEE:  
THE SON OF MAN MUST BE DELIVERED OVER  
TO THE HANDS OF SINNERS, BE CRUCIFIED  
AND ON THE THIRD DAY BE RAISED AGAIN



# MAR. 2024

**Can't be here  
in-person?**

Join us live Sundays  
at 9 & 10:45 am  
on Facebook, Imbc.tv,  
or our LMBC app.

**3rd**

## Dinner Together

with Communion

@ 6 pm

in the FLC Gym

**13th**

**Refuel Fundraiser:  
Boxed Dinners to go**

**14th**

**Widows Luncheon:  
Roaring Lion**

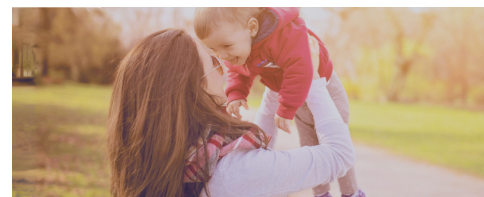
- 12:30 pm, Renaissance Room

**15th**

**PrimeTime Celebrates  
St. Patrick's Day**

- 6 pm, Renaissance Room

Menu: Corned beef & cabbage  
or chicken, Irish soda bread,  
tea and coffee. You bring:  
something green; veggie,  
salad or dessert. Don't forget  
to wear something green!  
Contact Vida or Blanche to  
register.



## WALK FOR LIFE

March 9th, 2024 10 AM

Ritter Park

Register at:  
ANBPRC.ORG

**Lewis KIDS  
connection**

Visit [lmbc.org/lkc](https://lmbc.org/lkc)  
or join our [Facebook group](#)

## Sunday Mornings

(Worship Center lower level)

- 3: Peter worshipped Jesus
- 10: We are saved by faith in Jesus
- 17: Jesus calmed a storm
- 24: Jesus healed and forgave
- 31: Jesus healed sickness

## Wednesdays @ 7 pm

(Family Life Center)

6,13,20,27: Bible Basics

**Egg  
Hunts**

**Hunt in the Dark**  
March 22 @ 8 pm (SMB)

**Traditional Hunt**  
March 23 @ 11 am (FLC)

**29th**

**GOOD  
FRIDAY**

7 pm

**31st**

**EASTER  
SUNDAY**

8, 9:30, & 11 am

**REFUEL**

The Student Ministry of Lewis Memorial Baptist Church

**Wednesdays**  
@ 6:45 pm

A weekly gathering for 6th-12th grade  
students, where they connect with each other,  
worship with a student-led band, hear teaching  
from the Bible, connect in small groups, and  
are challenged to grow spiritually.





# PASSION WEEK GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

This Passion Week guide is designed to help you make sense of the events of the most important week in the life of Christ while He was on earth. Each day has a brief summary of events that could serve as a devotional of sorts for that specific day. Scripture readings from all four Gospels are also included for each day. It is our hope that this guide will be helpful as you reflect on the importance of Passion Week this year, and every year after.

## ***PALM SUNDAY, March 24th***

Today marks the beginning of the end of Jesus' work on earth. As Jesus and His disciples ascended toward Jerusalem, a large crowd gathered around them in anticipation of what was to come. Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead a few days before, and it seems the news of this great miracle was the talk of the crowds. Entering Jerusalem, Jesus is riding on the unbroken colt of a donkey; His actions are intentionally symbolic. Almost 500 years earlier, Zechariah 9:9 prophesied this very day! The prophet said that the future King of Israel would come into Jerusalem on the unbroken colt of a donkey. Some recognized the significance of the event, and they lay down their robes and palm branches (this is why we refer to this day as Palm Sunday) to form a royal red carpet. Furthermore, those same crowds begin to chant a few lines from Psalm 118, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

The religious leaders are completely taken aback by the whole event. Instead of responding with joy and excitement, they respond with jealousy: "we are gaining nothing, look, the world has gone after Him" (Jn.12:19). Some Greeks, who were among the Passover pilgrims in Jerusalem, come to Philip to ask him about Jesus. Philip finds Jesus, who responds to them by predicting His death and describing it as the very purpose for which He has come into the world; His words caused confusion (Jn.12:20-36). The Jews were looking for a king to be inaugurated, a king to lead them in the overthrow of the Roman government; instead, Jesus was talking about His upcoming death. The crowds looked for a Messiah who would rescue them politically and nationally as a people, but Jesus had come with a more important mission: He had come to save them spiritually. Remember, these same crowds who are chanting "Hosanna!" on Sunday are chanting "crucify Him" on Friday.

Before heading back to Bethany for the evening, Jesus makes an initial visit to the temple complex and heals the blind and the lame. He will come back to the temple tomorrow, but His actions will be drastically different as He calls out the corruption of the religious establishment.

Events that happened this day:

- Jesus enters Jerusalem: Mt.21:1-11; Mk.11:1-10; Lk.19:29-44; John 12:12-19
- Jesus predicts His death: John 12:20-36
- Jesus visits the temple: Mt.21:14-17; Mk.11:11

## ***HOLY MONDAY, March 25th***

As Jesus and His disciples were returning to Jerusalem, He spotted a fig tree, hoping to find something to eat. However, instead of finding some edible fruit, He finds that the tree only has leaves on it. His response to the fruitless fig tree might seem strange, but we must consider both the larger context and the fact that Jesus often used object lessons to get His point across to His followers. Israel is often characterized in the Old Testament as a fig tree (Jer.8:13; Hos.9:10), so Jesus' cursing of the fig tree is symbolic of God's judgment on the generation of Jesus' day who would reject Him. It was evident that there was a segment of the religious establishment that made a showing of bearing fruit, but within, they themselves were fruitless. In other words, they were spiritually barren.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, He heads straight for the temple to deal with the problem of corruption that He noticed yesterday. Three times a year, every man in Israel must celebrate three festivals – one of which was the Passover (Deut.16:16). If you lived close to Jerusalem, then you would likely select a choice animal from your flocks, one without blemish or spot as the law required. During the short trip, however, there was always the danger of your sacrifice (animal) being tainted in some fashion. When you arrive at the temple to present your sacrifice, there is always a looming possibility that the priest might reject your sacrifice. Since the priests were known to have standards that no one could meet, most men would opt to bring money to buy a sacrifice when they arrived. Of course, the inflation rate of buying a sacrifice in the temple was exorbitant; and if you didn't have a coin minted in Israel – the shekel – then you had to exchange your money, which would incur yet another fee.

This exploitation from the priestly class angers Jesus in a righteous way. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and merchants, declaring to them that "My Father's house is a house of prayer;" but you have chosen to exploit the poor under the guise of worship. Calling out this corruption, Jesus was directly challenging the religious establishment. However, the religious leaders will not put up with Jesus' challenge to their authority, and they seek a way to get rid of Him for good.

Events that happened this day:

- Jesus curses a fig tree: Mt.21:18-19; Mk.11:12-14
- Jesus cleanses the temple: Mt.21:12-13; Mk.11:15-18; Lk.19:45-48
- Jesus enters Jerusalem: Mt.21:1-11; Mk.11:1-10; Lk.19:29-44; John 12:12-19



**HOLY TUESDAY, March 26th**

The religious leaders are eager to question Jesus about His actions on the previous day. As soon as Jesus enters the temple and begins to teach, the priests and elders interrupt Him and demand, “by what authority are you doing all of these things? Who gave you the right?” Jesus, however, responds to their question with a question of His own about John the Baptist’s ministry. He asks them, “did John’s authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human?” The priests and elders refuse to answer, knowing that whatever they said would not help their cause. The Gospel writer Matthew follows up this interchange with three parables (21:18-22:14); all three are about these religious leaders, and they know it! (21:45-46)

A second group comes forward to put Jesus to the test. This group, made up of the Pharisees (religious) and the Herodians (political), asked Jesus whether or not it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus answered them with a comparison. Just as the coin He was holding bore Caesar’s image and therefore testified to his ownership of it, so also human beings bear God’s image and therefore testify to His ownership of us: we are made in God’s image, we owe Him everything. The Pharisees and Herodians marveled at Jesus’ wisdom, but then another sect, the Sadducees, stepped forward with a theological question concerning the resurrection. The question is not only far-fetched, but it’s also illogical because the Sadducees don’t believe in the resurrection. The question was designed to make Jesus’ belief in the resurrection look ridiculous; however, Jesus showed them that the Pentateuch clearly implied the reality of a future resurrection. Why did Jesus use only the Pentateuch? Because that was the only portion of the Old Testament that the Sadducees believed was authoritative. They walked away in amazement. A fourth question comes from a scribe who was part of the Pharisee sect. He asks Jesus which of the commandments is the greatest, and Jesus replies, “all of them!” Frustrated with all these questions, Jesus goes on the offensive, asking a question of His own – a question that no one is able to answer. After this, He launched into a full-blown verbal assault on these religious leaders, calling them hypocrites and blind guides, laying the root cause of the nation’s rejection of Him at their feet! (Matthew 23:1-36)

As Jesus leaves the temple on Tuesday, He makes a comment to His disciples that one day this temple will be completely demolished. Later that evening, when Jesus and His disciples stop to rest on the Mount of Olives, they ask Him about the timing of the prophecy that He spoke of earlier concerning the temple. Jesus then launches into a discourse about future events that would lead up to the establishment of the kingdom; we call this the Olivet Discourse.

**Events that happened this day:**

- The lesson from the fig tree: Mt.21:20-22; Mk.11:20-26
- Jesus teaches in the temple: Mt.21:23-23:39; Mk.11:27-12:44; Lk.20:1-21:4
- Jesus predicts the future: Mt.24-25; Mk.13:1-37; Lk.21:5-36

**SPY WEDNESDAY, March 27th**

Wednesday of Passion Week was a relatively quiet day compared to the events of Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Knowing what was to come in the next few days, it seemed that Wednesday was purposely quiet. Maybe this was a day in which Jesus carved out some hours to spend privately with the Father. The Gospel writer Luke (21:37-38) notes that Jesus continues His daily teaching at the temple, after which He returns back to Bethany to lodge there for the evening. This day has no active debates, no lively discussions, and no extended teaching session from Jesus, but there is much that is happening in secret. Not everyone is impressed with Jesus and His teaching, and He has a powerful group of enemies that are determined to get rid of Him.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that two days before the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, the chief priests, scribes, and elders are plotting a way in which they can get rid of Jesus for good. The Gospel writer Matthews tells us that their brainstorming session took place at the house of Caiaphas the high priest. A strategy session was needed if they wanted to shrewdly rid themselves of Jesus without causing a major uproar with the people. If the people got word of their actions, then the results for the religious establishment could be disastrous. The group agrees to wait after the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Thursday) when the crowds disperse and return to their homes. This would ensure that they could arrest Jesus without fear of the crowds.

**Events that happened this day:**

- Jesus continues His teaching in the temple: Lk.21:37-38
- The Sanhedrin plots to kill Jesus: Mt.26:3-5; Mk.14:1-2; Lk.22:1-2



**MAUNDY THURSDAY, March 28th**

Jesus had already made initial contact with some of His followers in Jerusalem to secure a place in which the group would share in the Passover meal. Some scholars believe that Jesus' arrangement of the meal location was made secretly so as to prevent Judas' betrayal plot from interrupting the meal. Sometime during the meal, Jesus gets up and washes the disciples' feet, even the feet of Judas. Jesus knew that Judas had already planned to betray Him (Jn.13:11), but He still proceeded to wash his feet anyway – that is the epitome of love. After the foot washing, Jesus makes a public declaration that there is a traitor at the table; the disciples are a bit confused about what Jesus meant, but Judas understands and promptly leaves the group to commence his actions of betrayal. As Jesus and His disciples continued the Passover meal, Jesus abruptly introduced a completely new explanation of the symbolism of bread and wine. These two elements now become part of our present-day observance of the Lord's Supper (communion) as we remember His body and blood that were given in sacrifice for all humanity.

As the evening continues on, Jesus gives His followers some additional instructions because He knows that the time of His death is quickly approaching. These instructions are collected into a body of material that we often call the Upper Room Discourse. We can thank the Apostle John as he is the only Gospel writer that includes this material (John 14-17). Toward the end of this discourse, Jesus offers up a prayer for His disciples (Jn.17:6-19) because He knows that these same disciples that are sitting at the table will fail in the face of persecution that very night. Specifically, He singles out Peter, saying that before the rooster crows, Peter will have denied Jesus three times. Of course, Peter vehemently denies that this would ever happen, assuring the Lord that he would follow Him to prison, even to death.

The night is late, and Jesus and His disciples head to the Garden of Gethsemane. The time for teaching and instruction is over, and the time for sorrow and distress is here. Jesus instructs the disciples to sit in a certain location while He takes Peter, James, and John with Him a little further to pray. Jesus pours out His heart to the Father, asking Him if there is any other way in which redemption can happen that would not include the cross. He knows He is about to bear God's judgment as a sin sacrifice for all the world. Nevertheless, He knows that the Father's will is by way of the cross, and He willingly submits Himself to the Father's plan. Taking a break from His time of prayer with the Father, Jesus finds His disciples fast asleep. The only source of human support and help during the hardest moment of His life was sleeping away. Yet even in this shocking moment of the disciples' carelessness, Jesus is more concerned for their welfare than His own – He knows that they, too, must pray so that they can be equipped to face the difficulties that lie ahead (Matt.26:41).

Judas, who left the scene earlier, now returns with a group of chief priests, Pharisees, and some Roman soldiers. Jesus steps forward and asks the group who they are here for, and when they answer, "Jesus of Nazareth," Jesus replies, "I am HE." When Jesus spoke these words (reminiscent of the phrase "I AM" in Exodus 3:14), the power behind those words caused the soldiers to retreat back and fall to the ground! Jesus permits the soldiers to arrest Him so long as they don't arrest His followers. However, Peter does briefly resist by cutting off the right ear of the high priest's servant; Jesus miraculously heals the ear and tells Peter that He must follow the Father's plan. At this point, all the disciples flee the scene, leaving Jesus deserted and alone.

Events that happened this day:

- The Passover meal: Mt.26:17-29; Mk.14:12-23; Lk.22:7-30; Jn.13:1-17:26
- Jesus predicts Peter's betrayals: Mt.26:31-35; Mk.14:27-31; Lk.22:31-34
- The Garden of Gethsemane: Mt.26:36-46; Mk.14:32-42; Lk.22:40-46
- Jesus is betrayed: Mt.26:47-56; Mk.14:43-52; Lk.22:47-53; Jn.18:2-12

**GOOD FRIDAY, March 29th**

Now that Jesus had been arrested, the religious leaders wanted to try Him for His crimes. Jesus was tried six different times: the first three trials were before Jewish leadership, and the second three trials were before Roman officials. All six trials were expedited because the religious establishment wanted to arrive at the death sentence before the news of Jesus' arrest got out among the people. Also, they needed the death sentence to be carried out before the Sabbath Day, which started Friday evening. The sixth and final trial takes place before Pilate. He renders his decision on the basis of expediency rather than truth or justice; he firmly believes Jesus to be an innocent man, but he also fears a riot and wants to satisfy the crowds who are yelling, "crucify Him!" In just a few hours, Jesus is tried six times and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

It's almost 9 am as Jesus begins His journey to Golgotha by carrying His cross. At some point along the way, Roman soldiers force a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross because He is too weak. The site of Jesus' crucifixion was outside of the city in keeping with the Jewish law requirement for executions (Heb.13:12). None of the Gospel authors provide any details concerning the actual crucifixion; they simply note the fact that it happened. Jesus was crucified at the third hour of the day (Mark 15:25), which is 9 am. Even on the cross, Jesus' enemies continue to mock Him to the very end, "...He saved others, but He cannot save Himself..." (Luke 23:35-38). The irony is that if Jesus had come down from the cross, He would have saved Himself but not others. At noon, darkness descends on the land (Mark 15:33), lasting for three hours. At 3 pm, Jesus died for the sins of humanity (Luke 23:46). Immediately, the earth shook, and the curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom, signifying that God's people will now have direct access to God because of Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus was taken off the cross before sundown and placed in a tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea (Nicodemus assisted with the burial of the body). Two women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary (the mother of Joses) (Mark 15:47) observe Jesus' burial location. They believe His body has not been sufficiently prepared because of the hasty nature of His burial; they plan to return after the Sabbath with additional spices and ointments.

Events that happened this day:

- The six trials of Jesus: Mt.26:57-27:26; Mk.14:53-15:15; Lk.22:63-23:25; Jn.18:28-19:16
- The road to the Cross: Mt.27:27-34; Mk.15:16-23; Lk.23:26-49; Jn.19:17
- The crucifixion of Jesus: Mt.27:35-44; Mk.15:24-32; Lk.23:33-43; Jn.19:18-27
- Jesus breathes His last breath: Mt.27:45-56; Mk.15:33-41; Lk.23:44-49; Jn.19:28-37
- Jesus is buried: Mt.27:57-61; Mk.15:42-47; Lk.23:44-49; Jn.19:28-37



## ***HOLY SATURDAY, March 30th***

The Gospels do not provide any information concerning the activities of the Apostles on the Sabbath Day (Friday sundown to Saturday sundown). The previous day's rapid-fire events probably left them drained physically, mentally, and emotionally. Their hopes and dreams for the establishment of God's kingdom lie shattered as their leader was executed for religious crimes. Saturday must have been a truly quiet day, filled with plenty of introspection and fearful anticipation that the religious leaders would come after them next.

While the disciples are quiet on the Sabbath, the religious leaders are not. The book of Matthew tells us that the chief priest and the Pharisees approach Pilate and ask him to secure the tomb wherein Jesus was buried. Their concern was over something Jesus had said earlier in the week: "after three days, I will rise." These religious leaders were worried that the disciples had planned to steal the body of Jesus so as to make a resurrection plausible, which would make "the last fraud worse than the first" (Matt.27:63-64). Pilate agrees to their request and places a guard of men at the tomb, and a large stone is rolled over the entrance to seal the tomb. Ironically, it's the actions of the religious leaders in wanting to secure the tomb that make the resurrection of Jesus even more supernatural (if that is actually a thing?). Even if the disciples were to somehow maneuver past the guards undetected, they would still have to deal with a huge stone that sealed the tomb. God used this group of religious leaders to make sure that no one could get into the tomb, and if, humanly speaking, no one can get into the tomb, then how is the resurrection possible? It is possible because Jesus is exactly who He said He was – the Messiah! The resurrection event on Sunday would be undeniable!

Events that happened this day:

- Guards are placed at the tomb: Mt.27:62-66

## ***RESURRECTION SUNDAY, March 31st***

Resurrection Day is finally here! The story of Jesus is not over yet, and the world is about to be turned upside down! Near the early dawn hours of Sunday (perhaps at sunrise), a group of women head to the tomb (looking at all four Gospel accounts, we can gather a complete list). It's hard to be precise at this juncture in the narrative, but it seems that as this group of women arrived at the burial site, they noticed that the stone had been rolled away. Mary Magdalene immediately leaves to run back and tell the disciples what has happened. The rest of the women continue towards the tomb and are greeted by an angel who tells them the Good News, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen..." (Matt.28:5). The angel tells the group to go and spread the news to the disciples that Jesus has risen and that He will meet them in Galilee. By the way, women were the first eyewitnesses of the events on Resurrection morning, not the male disciples!

Peter and John rush to the tomb based on Mary Magdalene's report and find it empty. Peter enters first, followed by John. The presence of the linen cloths and the folded napkin point to a supernatural resurrection indeed. If grave robbers had taken Jesus' body, the tomb would have been turned over; and grave robbers would not have left behind the clothes and spices. John specifically recounts how the sight of the linen cloths and face cloth caused him to believe (Jn.20:8). Peter and John head back to their homes as Mary Magdalene comes back to the tomb. However, her spirit of sorrow and mourning is drastically altered as she encounters the resurrected Christ.

After Jesus' resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene, Jesus then appears to two disciples who are traveling back to Emmaus from Jerusalem. During their walk back, they discuss the week's events, trying to make sense of everything while Jesus appears beside them. Jesus curiously asks them about the events, and they reveal their disbelief. This does not sit well with Jesus, and he rebukes them: have you not read the Old Testament? Jesus takes these two disciples on a messianic tour of the Old Testament, demonstrating how all Scripture points to Him! Eventually, these two disciples finally recognize Who is with them, but it's too late as Jesus vanishes. They were so excited about what had happened that they immediately traveled back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples. As they are in the process of recounting their story, Jesus appears to all those in the Upper Room; the only one of the eleven who is not present is Thomas. In the coming days, Jesus would appear to all the disciples again; this time, Thomas would be present, and he would be able to see the hands and feet of Jesus.

Events that happened this day:

- The empty tomb is discovered: Mt.28:1-7; Mk.16:1-7; Lk.24:1-7; Jn.20:1
- News of the resurrection gets out: Mt.28:8-10; Lk.24:8-11; Jn.20:2-18
- Jesus appears on the Emmaus Road: Lk.24:13-35
- Jesus appears in the Upper Room: Lk.24:36-43; Jn.20:19-23

## **EPILOGUE**

The Bible tells us that for forty days after the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to many other people and groups of people to demonstrate the reality of his resurrection! The Good News is that Jesus is alive today! Christ has defeated death and the grave, and one day He is coming back for those who believe in Him! But until that time comes, all believers are entrusted with one mission, "to make disciples of all nations" (Matt.28:19-20).



# DID JESUS RISE FROM THE DEAD?

## THE KNOWN FACTS

- JESUS' TOMB WAS FOUND EMPTY
- JESUS WAS TORTURED AND CRUCIFIED
- CHRISTIANITY SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE THROUGHOUT THE KNOWN WORLD.
- MANY DIFFERENT WITNESSES (OVER 500) ATTESTED TO SEEING JESUS AFTER HIS DEATH.
- ALL THE DISCIPLES WERE TORTURED FOR THEIR FAITH, AND 11 OF THE 12 ENDED UP DYING FOR IT.
- PREVIOUSLY SCARED DISCIPLES WERE ONLY DAYS LATER CLAIMING THE RESURRECTION WITH BOLDNESS.
- THE DISCIPLES PREACHED TO CROWDS OF THOUSANDS IN JERUSALEM, CLAIMING THAT JESUS HAD RISEN FROM THE DEAD.

## THE BEST THEORIES EXPLAINING THE FACTS

### 1 SWOON

JESUS DIDN'T ACTUALLY DIE, BUT FAINTED (SWOONED) ON THE CROSS AND LATER REVIVED.

### 2 HALLUCINATION

JESUS' FOLLOWERS ONLY IMAGINED THAT THEY SAW HIM.

### 3 SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

JESUS ONLY ROSE FROM THE DEAD IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE.

### 4 THEFT

THE DISCIPLES STOLE THE BODY AND CLAIMED HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD.

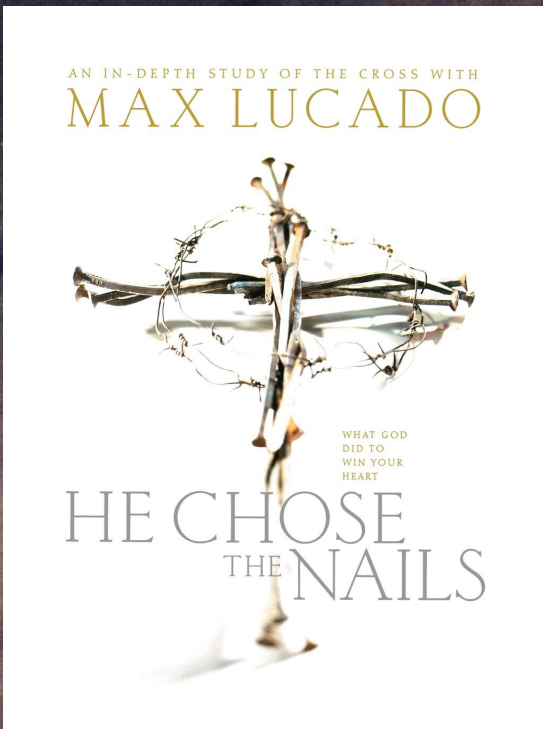
### 5 WRONG TOMB

CONFUSED BY GRIEF, THE DISCIPLES WENT TO THE WRONG TOMB.

THE MOST PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION OF ALL THE FACTS IS THAT GOD RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD!

## OBJECTIONS

- Roman soldiers, expert executioners, oversaw the crucifixion and pronounced him dead.
- How could Jesus, after being tortured, crucified, speared, and buried, unwrap himself, move a stone, defeat soldiers, and walk seven miles?
- On multiple occasions and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.
- The original disciples believed that Jesus was raised from the dead despite every predisposition to the contrary.
- The gospels claim to be historical accounts, not symbolism or allegory.
- The gospels provide multiple, independent attestations of these appearances.
- The earliest Jewish allegation that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body (Matt. 28:11-15) shows that the body was in fact missing from the tomb.
- The disciples were devastated by the death of Jesus.
- To steal the body, the disciples would have needed an elaborate plan including bribed guards, sufficient motive, a place to dispose of the body, faked witnesses—all with each of them taking the secret to his grave.
- The story is simple and lacks signs of legendary embellishment.
- Multiple witnesses saw where Jesus was laid.
- If Jesus was only raised in a spiritual sense, what happened to his physical body?
- Jesus' glorified resurrected body still has physical features: He could eat and be touched.
- Paul claims Christianity is pointless without a bodily resurrection.
- There is no evidence that the body was stolen.
- Would the disciples allow themselves to be martyred for an elaborate hoax?
- Joseph of Arimathea's involvement and testimony must be rejected to accept this view.
- If the disciples accidentally went to the wrong tomb, all anyone would have to do is produce Jesus' body.
- Contemporary scholars have almost universally discounted all of these theories. None of these naturalistic theories succeeds in meeting the conditions as well as the resurrection theory.



# WHAT WE'RE READING

by Mary Ellen Black

If you are looking for a good book or devotional to help prepare your heart for the upcoming Easter Celebration, grab a copy of "He Chose The Nails" by renowned author Max Lucado. I read the book for the first time years ago, and it changed the way I prepare for and celebrate Easter. The celebration of Easter is about so much more than the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus; that in itself would be enough, and that is what most celebrate without fault. However, reading this book opened my eyes and deepened my understanding of the immense love of God and "what He did to win the hearts of men." I read it year after year now as a tool to refocus my mind on the tragically beautiful details of the crucifixion. From the cross to the nails to the crown of thorns and even the spit of the soldier, Lucado uses them all and even more to draw our attention to the meaningful details God included in this unbelievable act of love. - MaryEllen

"To take on our sins is one thing, but to take on our sunburns, our sore throats? To experience death, yes, but to put up with life?" God did this so that his followers would fully trust him, Lucado explains, and know that their pain was understood. Lucado uses good humor and everyday situations (such as coping with road rage) to bring his points home. His skill in highlighting even the smallest detail of the crucifixion scene will prove an epiphany for many readers." (unknown source)

"Is your heart unsettled by the chaos of the world? Are you heavy-laden with bad moments, mad moments, or anxious moments? Today, rest in God's self-giving love and leave all your troubles at the foot of the cross."

There were no accidents on the days surrounding Jesus' death. Jesus' last moments were not left up to chance. God chose the path; he selected the nails. Our Lord planted the trio of crosses and painted the sign. God was never more sovereign than in the details of the death of his Son. God didn't have to do all these things, you know. The only required act for our salvation was the shedding of blood, yet he did much more. So much more.

In He Chose the Nails, New York Times bestselling author and pastor Max Lucado will help you:

- Learn just how much God loves and cares for you
- Take comfort that Jesus understands everything you face in this life
- Remember that there's nothing you can do to earn God's gift
- Stand firm in the promise that you are forgiven, and you are welcome in God's presence

Search the scene of the cross and listen for God's gentle whisper, "I did it just for you." (from the book's description)



# IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST, I GLORY

The cross is undoubtedly the most prominent and prolific symbol of the Christian faith. This endearing emblem is seen on church steeples, stained glass windows, and choir robes and is often worn on necklaces and even imprinted on t-shirts. Many Christians cherish the cross as a sign that God loves us, reminding us that *“while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8).

According to the scriptures, the cross was not always seen in a favorable light. We read in the book of Galatians, *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”).* In his hymn, *“The Old Rugged Cross,”* George Bennard described the cross as “the emblem of suffering and shame.” However, in chapter 6 of Galatians, the apostle Paul says, *“But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* So, how did this cross of shame become a cross of glory, and why is it so precious to the believer?

### I. Because of Its Central Place in History

In God’s perfect timing, Jesus came into this world to deliver us from the law and our sins. It is very appropriate to divide the years of history between BC (before Christ) and AD (in the year of our Lord). In Galatians 4:4, we read, *“In the fullness of time God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons.”* John Bowring

recognized the historic centrality of the cross when he penned these words at the beginning of his insightful hymn, “In the Cross of Christ I Glory”:

“In the cross of Christ I glory,  
towering o’er the wrecks of time.  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.”

### II. Because of Its Comfort for the Christian Life

The eighth chapter of Romans contains a very encouraging message for believers. It tells us, *“We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us,”* and that *“Nothing shall ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* A few verses earlier, Paul asked an interesting question, *“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”* No matter what we go through in the Christian life, we can remember that we have a God who loved us so much that He gave His only Son, and if He met our greatest need, we can be assured that He will meet every need we face. John Bowring, in verse 2 of “In the Cross of Christ I Glory,” put this idea into poetic form:

“When the foes of life o’ertake,  
hopes deceive and fears annoy,  
never shall the cross forsake me.  
Lo! It glows with peace and joy.”

Scottish songwriter, Elizabeth Clephane, calls the cross “a home within the wilderness, a rest along the way.”

### III. Because of Its Exclusive Power to Save

Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 1:18, *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”* Without the atoning work of Christ on the cross, we would be forever lost. When Jesus died in our place and for our sins, He cried out, *“It Is Finished,”* and our sin debt was paid in full. Nothing can be added to the sacrifice of Christ.

If righteousness and forgiveness of sin could come through any other source, then Christ died in vain (Galatians 2:21).

### IV. Because of Its Universal Reach

In the first epistle of John, it is written, *“He Himself is the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”* In the book of Revelation chapter 5, we read of a great multitude crying out, *“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”*

Notice that those who were redeemed came from all over the earth. This is not a gospel that

is limited to a small part of the world.

### V. It’s Eternal Prospective

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* God offers life unending to those who will believe in Him. The Lamb of God who gave His life on Calvary is the One that we will praise for all of eternity as we cry out with the heavenly throng, *“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!”*

“In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever,  
Till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.”

Fanny Crosby



by Nathan McClay

*Nathan McClay is an assistant pastor and oversees the music and worship ministry of LMBC. He has been serving God at Lewis since 1991. Nathan and his wife, Audrey, have four children and two grandchildren.*



# THE TOMB IS EMPTY ... SO NOW WHAT?

**T**he Tomb is empty, so now what? This is a question that I entered into my journal shortly after Easter of 2022. I don't remember why it entered my mind, but what I recorded were answers from the writings of Paul. I seemed to favor a passage found in Philippians 2, as I wrote: "Verses 1-8 are a perfect passage to answer the question." -

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Philippians 2:1-8

Many of Paul's writings hold answers to my question. However, perhaps none more clearly than these verses found in Philippians chapter two.

Paul poses his own questions at the opening of the chapter, which opens the doorway for him to teach the Philippians what it means to live the Christian life. After listing many "dos and don'ts," like live in unity, be tender and compassionate, don't be selfish or a show-off, but be humble and think of others, not just yourselves, Paul makes sure they truly understand what he's saying by using Christ as their example. He didn't just tell them to have the same attitude of Christ - but he took all personal interpretation out of the mix by listing precisely what that attitude entailed.

Jesus didn't hold out His "God card" and wait for everyone to serve Him. Instead, He...

- left Heaven for the purpose of saving the world
- took on human flesh and dwelt among men
- humbly submitted to God's authority
- died a death meant for the guilt of a criminal

However, the empty tomb wasn't the end of Jesus' legacy of faith. He wasn't meant only to reach just those early disciples but to continually be a way for 'the world' to come to God through Him. Now that the tomb was empty, the work was left to His followers. Their job was to take His message to the world - and in large part by the way they lived and loved. Consider some of Jesus' commands/teachings, such as John 13:34 and Mark 12:29-31, where He emphasized love.

So now I am giving you a new commandment: love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. John 13:34

Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." Mark 12:29-31

Jesus told them these things because He knew the tomb would be empty. He knew one day He would no longer be with them on the earth, so He prepared them for after the empty tomb - by showing and telling them how to live and love after He was gone:

- Love others (John 13:34)
- Love God (Mark 12:29-31)
- Spread the Gospel (Mark 16:15)
- Make the Father known (1 Cor. 1:17; Rom. 10:14; Matt. 5:16)

Paul summed it up nicely in Colossians 3:17 by telling the believers that whatever they did or said, they should do it as representatives of Jesus - and this, my friends, is another great answer or summation to our question, "The tomb is empty, so now what?" Because, when we live and love like Jesus, we are making His message known, which is the very essence of making God known.

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. Colossians 3:17

**by Mary Ellen Black**



*Mary Ellen is a member of the LMBC office staff and the copy and content editor for Connect Magazine. She is the leader of the Insideout Life Group at LMBC and host of the online Bible Study, Journey Through the Word. Her mission is to encourage, equip, and empower women to have a full and vibrant relationship with God and a passion for His Word. She is the mother of two grown daughters, the Oma (grandmother) of one grandson, and the writer and creator of the blog "Me from the Insideout". (mefromthensideout.com)*





# MISSIONARIES OF THE MONTH

IN AFRICA

JJ & Melissa Alderman, Togo

Bret & Katie Anderson, Tanzania

**SECURED** C. Family, Egypt

Adam & Faith Drake, Togo

Diana Ferrell, Uganda

John & Kidst Getaneh, Zambia

**SECURED** G. Family, Egypt

Pascal & Becky Grenade, Mauritius

Darin & Kathy Ishler, Kenya

Jim Jeremias, Kenya

**SECURED** W. Family, North Africa

Tom & Marilyn Wilson, South Africa



For full updates, go to [lmbc.org/missionary-updates](https://lmbc.org/missionary-updates)

**DO YOU KNOW JUST HOW BAD IT IS?**

**The Dominican Republic is a destination for sex tourists targeting 15 to 17-year-old girls in coastal areas.**

**HELP US CHANGE THEIR REALITY.**

*I didn't find mercy... mercy found me...*  
**mercy**  
WORKSHOP

## GARY & ALLI HALE

You can restore their futures in Jesus' Name.

We want to share some eye-opening statistics about the challenges faced by women and children in the Dominican Republic and how you can be part of the solution through your support of our mission at Mercy Workshop.

### **1. Vulnerability to Sexual Exploitation:**

The Dominican Republic has the largest stateless population in the Western Hemisphere.

The Dominican Republic is a destination for sex tourists primarily from North America and Europe for child sex trafficking.

Sex trafficking of 15- to 17-year-old girls occurs in streets, in parks, and on beaches. Traffickers operating in networks continue to employ methods to mask their activities, including the use of catalogs to sell victims to potential clients, using private homes, rented private apartments, or extended-stay hotels to house victims.

### **2. Child, Early, and Forced Marriages:**

Shockingly, 32% of women aged 20-24 are married or in informal unions before turning 18.

The Dominican Republic ranks 2nd in Latin America in child marriage.

### **3. Gender Discrimination and Violence:**

Dominant social norms contribute to the normalization of violence against women and girls.

In 2020, the Dominican Republic had the second-highest rate of femicides in Latin America.

Your compassionate support of Mercy Workshop has the power to make a profound and eternal impact. We're dedicated to transforming these tough realities by offering education, empowerment, and unwavering support to vulnerable communities. Will you join us in weaving a brighter future for the children and women of the Dominican Republic? Your support and prayers are key to breaking the cycle of exploitation and violence.

We are so grateful for your love and faithfulness. Together, let's make a lasting difference!

Gratefully,  
Allison Hale



# 30 PIECES OF SILVER

*Sunday, March 24*

TURN THE PRICE OF BETRAYAL INTO  
**AN OFFERING OF LOVE**

In the month of March, we will celebrate the one event in history that sets Christianity apart from every other world religion on the face of the earth. Other religious systems may have noble deeds they encouraged from their followers, but only Christians have a living Savior who rose from the dead.

Palm Sunday (March 24) is the day we receive our “thirty pieces of silver” offering. The offering enables us to symbolically turn Judas’ price of betrayal into an offering of love. Pray about what God would have you give in this special offering and give to the Lord what He impresses on your heart. You can use the offering envelopes provided in all the lobbies or in your stewardship envelopes mailed monthly to your home, or simply note on your check, ‘30-pieces of silver’.

Everything given in this special offering will be used for the purpose of broadcasting the Gospel through our Daily Walk television program. Lives are changed through this outreach ministry. I invite you to join us in this important work.

# DIFFERENCE MAKERS

SERVE GOD SERVE OTHERS

Visit [lmbc.org/serve](http://lmbc.org/serve)  
to find specific needs  
and see where you  
can serve here at  
LMBC.

## EBENEZER IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO **REACH OUR COMMUNITY**

Check here monthly or online for the times and events and upcoming opportunities to volunteer or participate and help us make a difference.

### EBENEZER CALENDAR

all at Ebenezer unless otherwise stated

**MARCH 12**

**First Responders Meals**

11 am - 2 pm & 7 - 9 pm

**Encouragement & Prayer**

11 am - 2 pm

**MARCH 28**

**Bible Club**

4 - 5:15 pm

**KIDS**  
club

## Invite others to the Celebration

This edition of the Connect is all about the Cross of Christ and its message of God’s love. Will you help us reach others with the message by inviting them to two very special events in March: Our Good Friday service on March 29 at 7 pm and our three Easter morning services at 8, 9:30, & 11 am? You will find tickets in the lobbies to make the invitation easy and to give the those you invite a way to remember the dates, times, and location.







## TAKE A LOOK AT THE LATEST FAMILY NEWS

### Births

- Silas David Adkins, born to Perry & Kim Adkins
- Henry David Apgar, born to John & Meghan Apgar

### Bereavements

- Jim Bailes, Judy Bailes' husband
- Terry Chapman, Roger Chapman's brother
- Charolette Ann Cutlip Greer, Kelli Mullen's mother
- Manokel Hinshaw, Greg Hinshaw's mother
- Lawrence Olson, David Olson's father
- Connie Sue Rito, Jim Keaton's sister

### Ways to Give:



Offering Boxes  
in the Auditorium



Imbc.org  
or our App



By mail

# LOOKING FOR A STARTING POINT?

How to join our community of faith

Are you looking for a church home?  
Would you prayerfully consider whether God  
may be leading you to our family of believers?  
If you are ready, follow these simple steps:

## 1st Baptism



Trust in Christ and  
follow Him in believer's  
baptism.

## 2nd Register (pick 1)



**In Service:** scan the QR  
code on the pew in front  
of you and let us know  
you would like to join.  
**Online:** [imbc.org/register](https://imbc.org/register)  
**Call:** 304-736-7676

## 3rd Discover



Check out the  
information in the  
visitor packet you  
received when you  
registered with us or  
visit [imbc.org/what-we-believe](https://imbc.org/what-we-believe) to learn  
about our core beliefs  
and more.

## 4th Experience



Come to the next  
Starting Point on  
**Sunday, April 14, 2024**  
at 4:30 pm in the HIS  
Way Cafe (SMB), where  
you'll meet with our  
Pastors to begin your  
membership experience.  
**Call:** 304-736-7676  
**Pre-register:** [imbc.org/starting-point](https://imbc.org/starting-point)

# WANT TO JOIN A LIFEGROUP?

Come grow with us

### SUNDAYS @ 10:30 am

Believing, Belonging, & Becoming (L114) ..... Thurman Lowder

### @ 10:45 am

College Group (S101) ..... Wyatt & Emily McCabe

Through the Bible (S104) ..... Jared Blankenship

Wall Builders (S100) ..... Steve Bragg

Cornerstone (S102) ..... Tim Koletka

Maranatha (Renaissance Room) ..... Chuck Daniel

### TUESDAYS @ 1 pm

Fearless (S100) ..... Estep/Wyrick

### @ 6 pm

Life Together (S100) ..... Tim Yates

### @ 6:30 pm

Pickle Ball & Jesus (Gym) ..... Chuck Daniel

### WEDNESDAYS @ 10 am

Encouraging Friends Ministry (L110) ..... Kate McMullen

### @ 6:30 pm

At Home with the Word (Tardy Home) ..... Steve & Vicky Tardy

It's Always Something (S100) ..... Chuck Daniel

### @ 6:45 pm

Abundant Life (L108) ..... McMullen/Gibson

College Group (S101) ..... Deanna Brammer

### @ 7 pm

Selah (L114) ..... Nathan McClay

Friends of God (Renaissance Room) ..... David & Mary Lemming

**NEW Location!** The House (S102) ..... Sergent/Ball

Rooted in Christ (F207) ..... Jonah & MaKayla Howerton

Whosoever (L112) ..... Austin Fry

### SUNDAYS @ 10:45 am

Journey with Him (L110) ..... Hale/Tritz

### MONDAYS @ 6 pm

Daughters of the King (S100) ..... Rebekah Shaffer

### TUESDAYS @ 9:30 am

Kingdom Seekers (Tardy Home) ..... Tardy/McMullen

### @ 10 am

At His Feet (S100) ..... Beth Jenkins

Sewing for God's Children (S104) ..... Barbara Keaton

### WEDNESDAYS @ 7 pm

4Ever His (LKC) ..... Leah Adkins

Women of God (F205) ..... Hager/Bashore

\*Embrace Grace (F206) \*for single pregnant ladies ..... Angela Cantley

### THURSDAYS @ 10 am

Women of Strength (HIS Way Cafe) ..... Mullens/Foreman

### WEDNESDAYS @ 10 am

Westridge Wisdom (S100) ..... Jeremy Shaffer

### @ 7 pm

Men of Truth (HIS Way Cafe) ..... Steve Bragg

Iron Sharpeners (L110) ..... Matheny/Miller

Sons of Thunder (L109) ..... Dan Thompson

### SUNDAYS @ 9 am

Young at Heart (L114) ..... Bill Blankenship

Connect is the monthly news and  
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Making disciples who  
live and love like Jesus

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304-736-7676  
[Imbc.org](https://imbc.org)

SUNDAY WORSHIP  
9 & 10:45 am (watch live  
at [imbc.tv](https://imbc.tv))

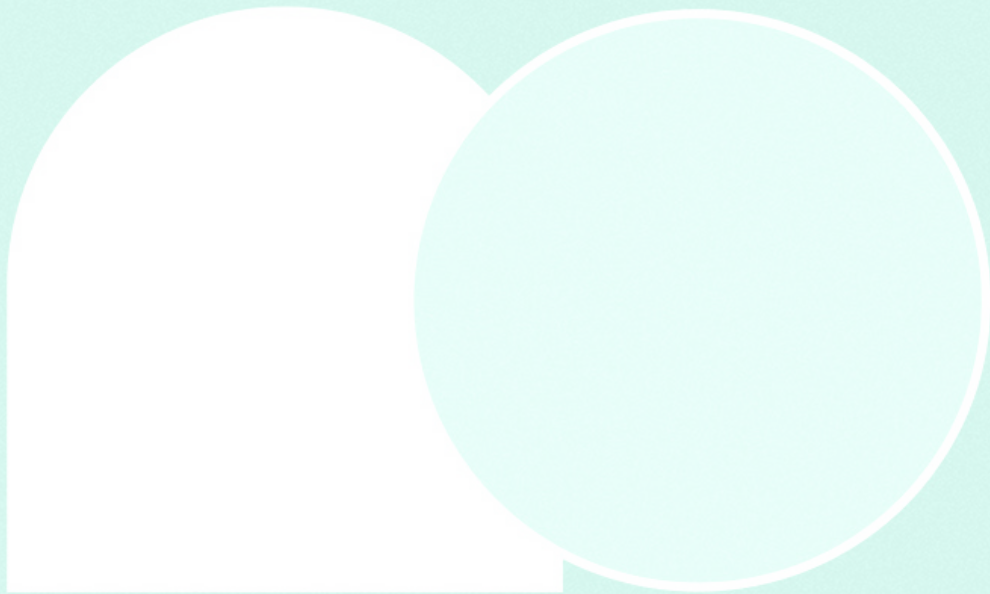
WEDNESDAY BIBLE  
STUDY  
7 pm

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Read previous editions  
of Connect at  
[imbc.org/connect](https://imbc.org/connect)



HE HAS  
RISEN!



REMEMBER HOW HE TOLD YOU, WHILE  
HE WAS STILL WITH YOU IN GALILEE:  
THE SON OF MAN MUST BE DELIVERED OVER  
TO THE HANDS OF SINNERS, BE CRUCIFIED