

CHRIST CHURCH CLIFTON
Building towards Easter 2018

Bible Readings from Monday 5 March to Easter Day

1 Matthew

Matthew 21:1 – 28:20
New International Version – UK (NIVUK)

5 March

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as king

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples,² saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.’

⁴This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵‘Say to Daughter Zion,

“See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’

‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’

‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, ‘Who is this?’

¹¹The crowds answered, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.’

6 March

Jesus at the temple

¹²Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves.¹³ ‘It is

written,' he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer," but you are making it "a den of robbers."'

¹⁴ The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were indignant.

¹⁶ 'Do you hear what these children are saying?' they asked him.

'Yes,' replied Jesus, 'have you never read,

"'From the lips of children and infants

you, Lord, have called forth your praise"?''

¹⁷ And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

7 March

Jesus curses a fig-tree

¹⁸ Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹ Seeing a fig-tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, 'May you never bear fruit again!' Immediately the tree withered.

²⁰ When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. 'How did the fig-tree wither so quickly?' they asked.

²¹ Jesus replied, 'Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig-tree, but also you can say to this mountain, "Go, throw yourself into the sea," and it will be done. ²² If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.'

The authority of Jesus questioned

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?'

²⁴ Jesus replied, 'I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵ John's baptism – where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?'

They discussed it among themselves and said, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will ask, "Then why didn't you believe him?"' ²⁶ But if we say, "Of human origin"— we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.'

²⁷ So they answered Jesus, 'We don't know.'

Then he said, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.'

8 March

The parable of the two sons

²⁸ 'What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, "Son, go and work today in the vineyard."

²⁹ "'I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ 'Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, "I will, sir," but he did not go.

³¹ 'Which of the two did what his father wanted?'

'The first,' they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.'

9 March

The parable of the tenants

³³ 'Listen to another parable: there was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall round it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ³⁴ When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

³⁵ 'The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them in the same way. ³⁷ Last of all, he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son," he said.

³⁸ 'But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance." ³⁹ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

⁴⁰ 'Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?'

⁴¹ 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,' they replied, 'and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.'

⁴² Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes”?

⁴³ ‘Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.’

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. ⁴⁶ They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

10 March

The parable of the wedding banquet

22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

⁴ ‘Then he sent some more servants and said, “Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.”

⁵ ‘But they paid no attention and went off – one to his field, another to his business. ⁶ The rest seized his servants, ill-treated them and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

⁸ ‘Then he said to his servants, “The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹ So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.” ¹⁰ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ ‘But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹² He asked, “How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?” The man was speechless.

¹³ ‘Then the king told the attendants, “Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

¹⁴ ‘For many are invited, but few are chosen.’

11 March

Paying the poll-tax to Caesar

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷ Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the poll-tax to Caesar or not?’

¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, ‘You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for paying the tax.’ They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ and he asked them, ‘Whose image is this? And whose inscription?’

²¹ ‘Caesar’s,’ they replied.

Then he said to them, ‘So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.’

²² When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Marriage at the resurrection

²³ That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ²⁴ ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. ²⁷ Finally, the woman died. ²⁸ Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?’

²⁹ Jesus replied, ‘You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. ³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ³¹ But about the resurrection of the dead – have you not read what God said to you, ³² “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.’

³³ When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

12 March

The greatest commandment

³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’

Whose son is the Messiah?

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² ‘What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?’

‘The son of David,’ they replied.

⁴³ He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him “Lord”? For he says,

⁴⁴ “The Lord said to my Lord:

‘Sit at my right hand

until I put your enemies

under your feet.”’

⁴⁵ If then David calls him “Lord”, how can he be his son?’ ⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

13 March

A warning against hypocrisy

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² ‘The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practise what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

⁵ ‘Everything they do is done for people to see: they make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶ they love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷ they love to be greeted with respect in the market-places and to be called “Rabbi” by others.

⁸ ‘But you are not to be called “Rabbi”, for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ And do not call anyone on earth “father”, for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰ Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. ¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹² For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

14 March

Seven woes on the teachers of the law and the Pharisees

¹³ ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

¹⁵ ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

¹⁶ ‘Woe to you, blind guides! You say, “If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.” ¹⁷ You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? ¹⁸ You also say, “If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.” ¹⁹ You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰ Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹ And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. ²² And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.

²³ ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former. ²⁴ You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

²⁵ ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

²⁷ ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

²⁹ ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. ³⁰ And you say, “If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.” ³¹ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started!

³³ ‘You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? ³⁴ Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. ³⁵ And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

³⁷ ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”’

15 March

The destruction of the temple and signs of the end times

24 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² ‘Do you see all these things?’ he asked. ‘Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.’

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. ‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?’

⁴ Jesus answered: ‘Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, “I am the Messiah,” and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth-pains.

⁹ ‘Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but the one who stands firm to the end

will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵ ‘So when you see standing in the holy place “the abomination that causes desolation,” spoken of through the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand – ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. ¹⁹ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰ Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equalled again.

²² ‘If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. ²³ At that time if anyone says to you, “Look, here is the Messiah!” or, “There he is!” do not believe it. ²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you in advance. ²⁶ ‘So if anyone tells you, “There he is, out in the desert,” do not go out; or, “Here he is, in the inner rooms,” do not believe it. ²⁷ For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

²⁹ ‘Immediately after the distress of those days

“the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”

³⁰ ‘Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

³² ‘Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: as soon as its twigs become tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ³³ Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁴ Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

16 March

The day and hour unknown

³⁶ 'But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² 'Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

⁴⁵ 'Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷ Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, "My master is staying away a long time," ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

17 March

The parable of the ten virgins

25 'At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³ The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴ The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵ The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ 'At midnight the cry rang out: "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!"

⁷ 'Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out."

⁹ “No,” they replied, “there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.”

¹⁰ ‘But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹ ‘Later the others also came. “Lord, Lord,” they said, “open the door for us!”

¹² ‘But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.”

¹³ ‘Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

18 March

The parable of the bags of gold

¹⁴ ‘Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹ ‘After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.”

²¹ ‘His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

²² ‘The man with two bags of gold also came. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with two bags of gold: see, I have gained two more.”

²³ ‘His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

²⁴ ‘Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. “Master,” he said, “I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.”

²⁶ ‘His master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

²⁸ “So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

19 March

The sheep and the goats

³¹ ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ ‘Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

³⁷ ‘Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?”

⁴⁰ ‘The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

⁴¹ ‘Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was ill and in prison and you did not look after me.”

⁴⁴ ‘They also will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or ill or in prison, and did not help you?”

⁴⁵ ‘He will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”

⁴⁶ ‘Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.’

20 March

The plot against Jesus

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² ‘As you know, the Passover is two days away – and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.’

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵ ‘But not during the festival,’ they said, ‘or there may be a riot among the people.’

Jesus anointed at Bethany

⁶ While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, ⁷ a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

⁸ When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. ‘Why this waste?’ they asked. ⁹ ‘This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.’

¹⁰ Aware of this, Jesus said to them, ‘Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.’

Judas agrees to betray Jesus

¹⁴ Then one of the Twelve – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?’ So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

21 March

The Last Supper

¹⁷ On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?’

¹⁸ He replied, ‘Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, “The Teacher says: my appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.”’ ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.'

²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, 'Surely you don't mean me, Lord?'

²³ Jesus replied, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.'

²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, 'Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?' Jesus answered, 'You have said so.'

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.'

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

³⁰ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus predicts Peter's denial

³¹ Then Jesus told them, 'This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

"I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

³² But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.'

³³ Peter replied, 'Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.'

³⁴ 'Truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'this very night, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times.'

³⁵ But Peter declared, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the other disciples said the same.

22 March

Gethsemane

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.'³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and

he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.'

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. ⁴¹ 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.'

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!'

23 March

Jesus arrested

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.' ⁴⁹ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him.

⁵⁰ Jesus replied, 'Do what you came for, friend.'

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹ With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵² 'Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said to him, 'for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?'

⁵⁵ In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, 'Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

24 March

Jesus before the Sanhedrin

⁵⁷ Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

⁵⁹ The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward ⁶¹ and declared, 'This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days."'

⁶² Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, 'Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?' ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, 'I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.'

⁶⁴ 'You have said so,' Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.'

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?'

'He is worthy of death,' they answered.

⁶⁷ Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, 'Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?'

25 March

Peter disowns Jesus

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him. 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee,' she said.

⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all. 'I don't know what you're talking about,' he said.

⁷¹ Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, 'This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.'

⁷² He denied it again, with an oath: 'I don't know the man!'

⁷³ After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, 'Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.'

⁷⁴ Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, 'I don't know the man!' Immediately a cock crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: 'Before the cock crows, you will disown me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Judas hangs himself

27 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. ² So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

³ When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴ 'I have sinned,' he said, 'for I have betrayed innocent blood.'

'What is that to us?' they replied. 'That's your responsibility.'

⁵ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

⁶ The chief priests picked up the coins and said, 'It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.' ⁷ So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸ That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹ Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 'They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, ¹⁰ and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me.'

26 March

Jesus before Pilate

¹¹ Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?'

'You have said so,' Jesus replied.

¹² When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate asked him, 'Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?' ¹⁴ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge – to the great amazement of the governor.

¹⁵ Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. ¹⁶ At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, 'Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or

Jesus who is called the Messiah?’¹⁸ For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

¹⁹ While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: ‘Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.’

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

²¹ ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ asked the governor.

‘Barabbas,’ they answered.

²² ‘What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ Pilate asked.

They all answered, ‘Crucify him!’

²³ ‘Why? What crime has he committed?’ asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, ‘Crucify him!’

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood,’ he said. ‘It is your responsibility!’

²⁵ All the people answered, ‘His blood is on us and on our children!’

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

27 March

The soldiers mock Jesus

²⁷ Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers round him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. ‘Hail, king of the Jews!’ they said. ³⁰ They spat on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

28 March

The crucifixion of Jesus

³² As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means ‘the place of the

skull').³⁴ There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots.³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there.³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

³⁸ Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads⁴⁰ and saying, 'You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!'⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.⁴² 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.'⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God."⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

29 March

The death of Jesus

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, '*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?').

⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, 'He's calling Elijah.'

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink.⁴⁹ The rest said, 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him.'

⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!'

⁵⁵ Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs.⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

30 March

The burial of Jesus

⁵⁷ As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

The guard at the tomb

⁶² The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³ 'Sir,' they said, 'we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, "After three days I will rise again."' ⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.'

⁶⁵ 'Take a guard,' Pilate answered. 'Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.' ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

31 March

Jesus has risen

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

⁵ The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: "He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him." Now I have told you.'

⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and

worshipped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

The guards' report

¹¹ While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³ telling them, 'You are to say, "His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep."' ¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.' ¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Easter Day

The great commission

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'