

20 The Last Week Begins

SUNDAY

It is the Festival of Passover. Many pilgrims from distant lands come to Jerusalem... ...they come to pray in the temple.

Most pilgrims walked there, but Jesus had other ideas. Go to the village ahead of you. You will find a donkey. Untie it and bring it to me.

Praise to God. Who is he? That's the Prophet Jesus. He's the Messiah!

MONDAY

Jesus went to the Temple where... he turned over the money-lender's stall... ...and the tradesmen's stalls

TUESDAY

Jesus returned to the Temple, where he taught. Who gave you the right to do this? The last week was already half over...



This boy is riding through the streets on a donkey in memory of Jesus' own ride.

► A large crowd of people spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

The crowds walking in front of Jesus and those walking behind began to shout, 'Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God!'

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was thrown into an uproar. 'Who is he?' the people asked. 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee,' the crowds answered.

Matthew 21:8-11

Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem was certainly **spectacular**. It was also strange. Jerusalem was a holy city; pilgrims were expected to arrive on foot as a sign of respect. Even stranger, this is the only time in the gospels where Jesus is mentioned riding any sort of animal.

So why did he do it? Was it because, centuries earlier, according to the Old Testament, someone had said that the Messiah would arrive on a donkey?

The Jews who shouted, 'Praise to David's Son' obviously thought so. This is one of the titles used for the Messiah whom they expected.

But Jesus would have known it would cause quite a stir. He would have known, too, that he was a marked man from that moment onwards. The Sadducees would not accept it without a struggle.

► Jesus went into the Temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the stools of those who sold pigeons, and said to them, 'It is written in the Scriptures that God said, "My Temple will be called a house of prayer." But you are making it a hideout for thieves!' Matthew 21:12-13

His actions in the Temple would have made them even angrier. They were in charge of the Temple. That was why they asked him who had given him the right to interfere.

Some people believe that Jesus knew he was going to die – and that was why he had come to Jerusalem. But perhaps he just knew he was in danger. After all, he did not stay in the city at night; instead, he slept at Bethany, two miles away.

On just one night only, he did stay in the city. It was a Thursday. He planned to have supper with his disciples. It proved to be his last.

- Write out the following events in the order in which they happened:
 - Jesus teaches in the Temple.
 - Jesus attacks the money-lenders' stalls
 - The disciples find a donkey.
 - People put their cloaks on the ground.
 - Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey.
- How was Jesus' arrival different from that which the Jews expected of their King?
- Do you think Jesus' followers would have been surprised by his behaviour in the Temple? Give reasons.
 - Do you think he acted fairly? Again, give reasons.
- Divide into groups. One half of your group should answer part (a); the other should answer part (b).
 - You are a Sadducee who has seen Jesus' arrival. Write a report to the High Priest. In it, explain why you are unhappy at what you have seen.
 - You are a follower of Jesus. Describe to a friend what you saw and how you felt when Jesus arrived. Then, compare the differences between your two versions.

21 The Last Supper



Holy Communion, the service which reminds Christians of the Last Supper.

Jerusalem would have been packed with people during that last week of Jesus' life. They had come for Passover. This festival reminded Jews of the time when their ancestors had escaped from Egypt, where they had been slaves. Jesus was in Jerusalem for the same reason.

Part of the festival involved a special meal. Two of the disciples got it ready; all twelve were present that night. They could hardly have expected what would happen next:

► While they were at the table eating, Jesus said, 'I tell you that one of you will betray me – one who is eating with me.'

The disciples were upset and began to ask him, one after the other, 'Surely you don't mean me, do you?'

Jesus answered, 'It will be one of you twelve, one who dips his bread in the dish with me.'

While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. 'Take it,' he said, 'this is my body.'

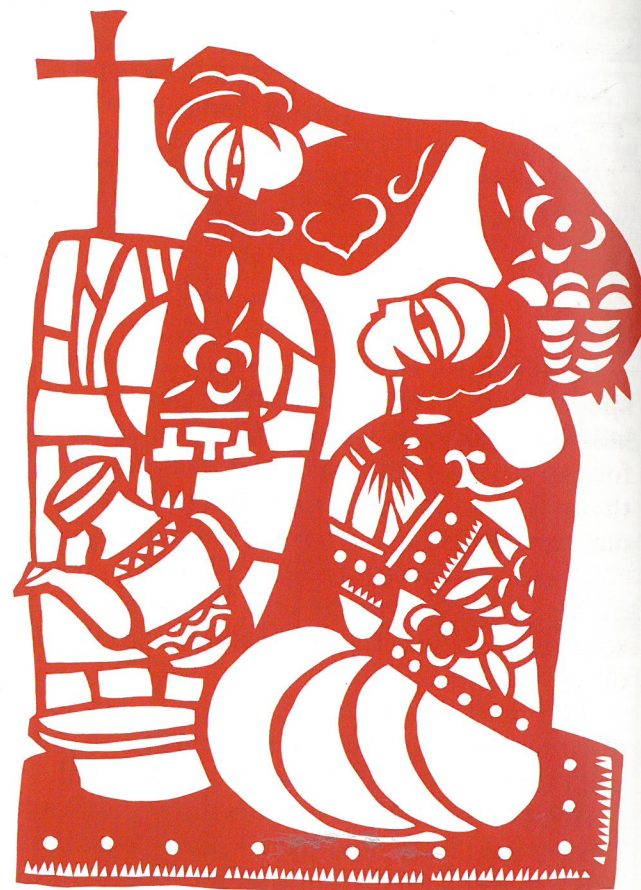
Then he took a cup, gave thanks to God, and handed it to them; and they all drank from it. Jesus said, 'This is my blood which is poured out for many'...

Mark 14:18–20, 22–24

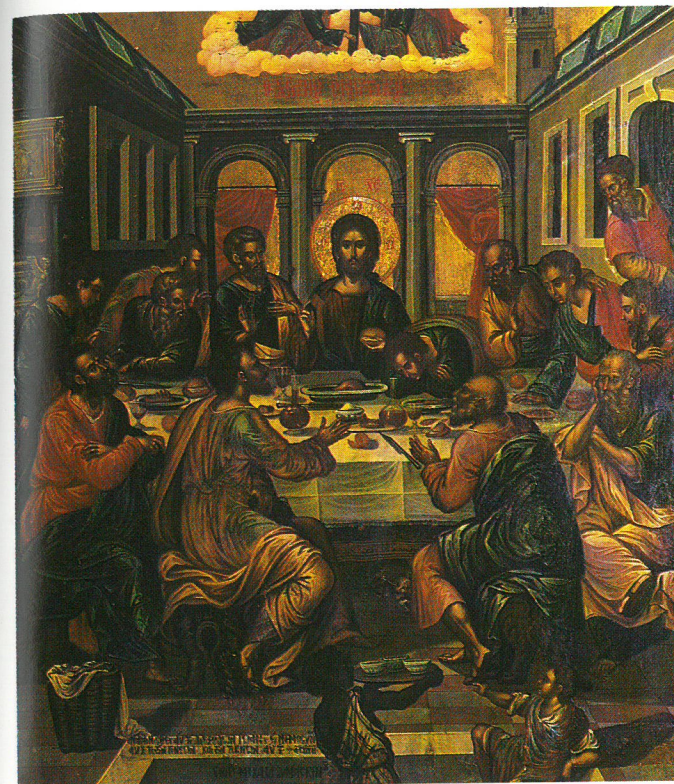
► Then he took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.'

Luke 22:19

Jesus was saying that the bread and wine were **symbols** – symbols of his body. His blood would be spilled and his body broken; in other words, he was going to die.



Washing the feet. This modern papercut is from China. (Notice the costumes.)



The Last Supper.

Soon afterwards, Luke tells us, an argument broke out among the disciples. They were arguing about which of them was the most important. Jesus had only just finished talking about his death, yet there they were, arguing about who would take over afterwards!

So Jesus told one last parable. In fact, he did more than tell it; he acted it. Taking a towel and a basin of water, he began to wash his disciples' feet. It was the sort of job a servant would do for guests.

He explained what it meant. His disciples were to follow his example and serve each other. No one should think he was more important than anyone else. Then, he gave his final instructions: 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples!'

The early Christian church believed this last supper was very important. What happened, and what Jesus said, had to be remembered. So they created a special service so that people would not forget.

The service is called Holy Communion. It is based on the events of the Last Supper. One young Christian explains why he takes part in it:

► It's a time to be quiet and think about Jesus. It helps me to remember that Jesus died on the cross for me. Sometimes, when I eat the bread and drink the wine, I feel especially close to him.

The Sunday Times

P	A	S	S	O	V	E	R	O	L
U	N	L	R	U	V	G	E	N	A
C	L	A	B	O	D	Y	E	R	S
Z	A	C	L	U	A	P	N	X	T
B	E	F	O	R	T	T	I	D	S
G	R	E	T	A	W	E	W	H	U
I	L	E	W	O	T	K	E	L	P
J	B	W	A	S	H	M	N	F	P
B	L	O	O	D	D	Q	U	R	E
P	E	L	P	I	C	S	I	D	R

- 1 This word search contains a number of words in this chapter. Write down each one that you find and beside each word, write a sentence about it.
- 2 Look at the lower photograph on page 46. What was Jesus trying to teach his disciples?
- 3 a) In groups discuss what the word 'love' means. Write down your ideas.
b) What did Jesus mean by the word?
c) Give four examples of ways in which Christians could follow this commandment to love one another.
d) Give at least two ways in which they could go against it.
- 4 Suppose you were present at the Last Supper. Write a diary entry describing your feelings about what happened.
- 5 Make your own papercut of a scene during the last week of the life of Jesus.

22 Betrayal

Have you ever been let down by a friend? Perhaps they gave away a secret or talked about you behind your back. Maybe it hurt a little. You may even have felt you couldn't go on being their friend. You found you could not really trust them again.

Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' closest friends, betrayed him. This is an imaginary account of an interview with one of the other apostles afterwards.

► 'Judas? I'd rather not talk about him.'
 'Why?'
 'Well, he was never really one of us. He came from Judea. I never knew why Jesus let him join us. Okay, so he looked after the money, but someone else could have done that.'
 'But what did he do?'
 'Don't you know? You must be the only person who doesn't! He **betrayed** Jesus. If it hadn't been for him, Jesus would still be alive today. Jesus said someone would betray him. It was at the last meal we had together, the night before he died. Just after Jesus said it, Judas left.'
 'Didn't that make you suspicious?'
 'No, silly really. I don't know why we didn't put two and two together at the time.'
 'When did you work it out?'
 'Later, in the Garden of Gethsemane. I still can't believe it. He brought along these Jewish soldiers, then went up to Jesus and kissed him. That was the sign to the soldiers. Then they arrested Jesus.'
 'What happened to Judas?'
 'Don't you know? He went off and hanged himself.'



Judas betrays Jesus.

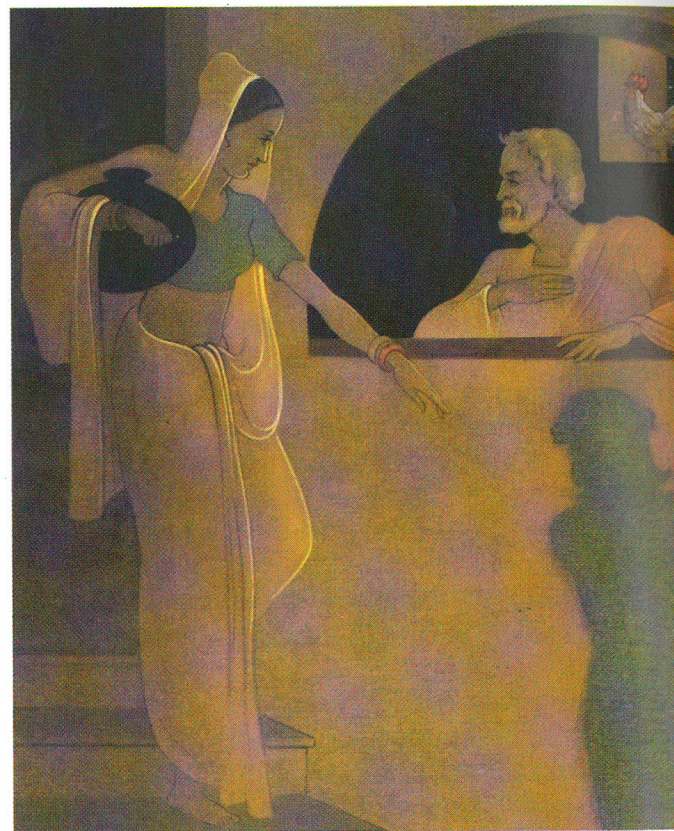
► When Judas, the **traitor**, learnt that Jesus had been condemned, he **repented** and took back the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders.

'I have sinned by betraying an innocent man to death!' he said.

'What do we care about that?' they answered. 'That is your business!'

Judas threw the coins down in the Temple and left; then he went off and hanged himself.

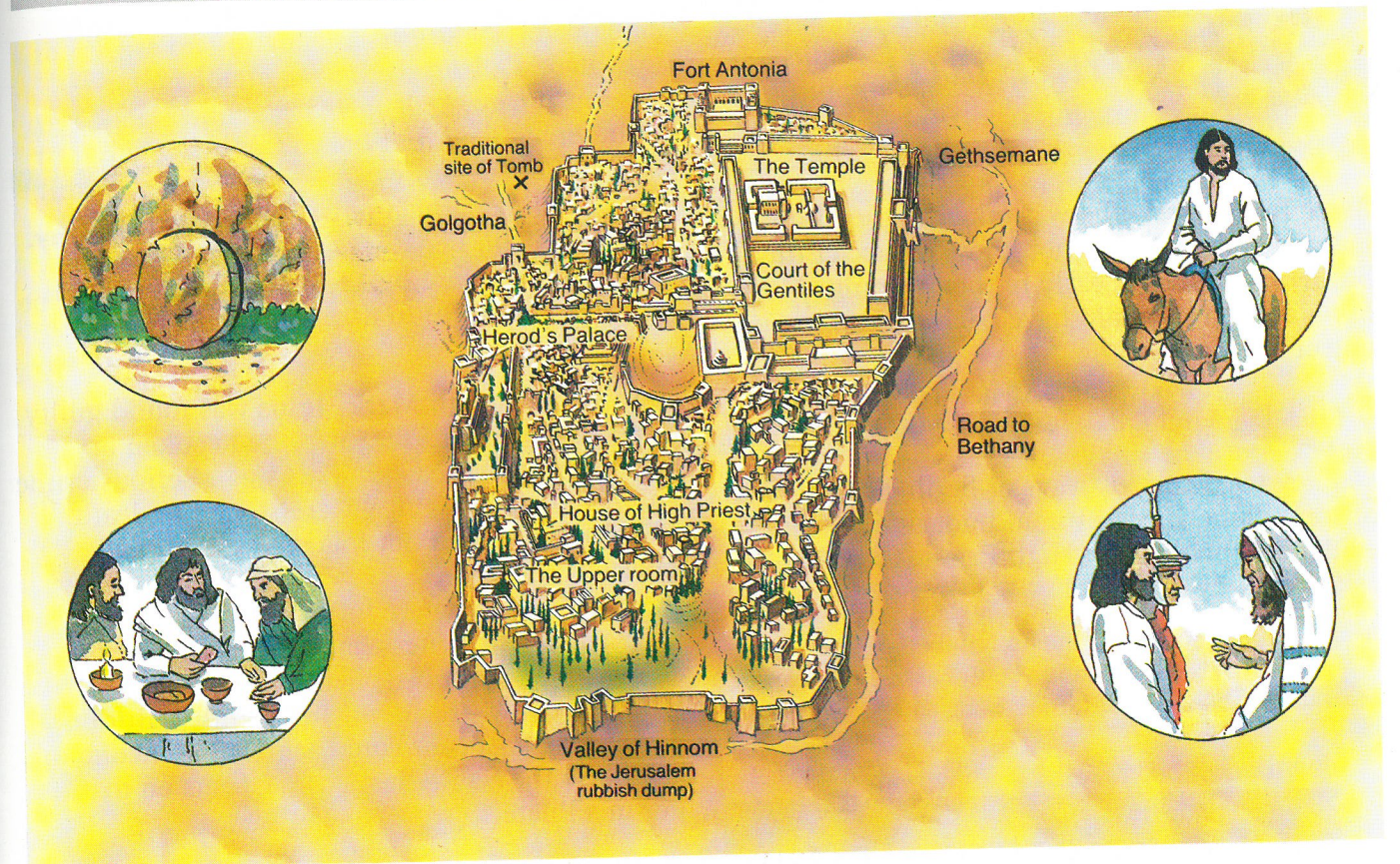
Matthew 27:3-5



Peter betrays Jesus.

Why did Judas betray Jesus? The gospels do not say and we will probably never know the answer. Perhaps he was just greedy and wanted the money.

But he may have wanted Jesus to prove he really was the Messiah. After all, Judas might have thought that Jesus would have to save himself if he was threatened with death. Then everyone would know he was the Messiah.



Map of Jerusalem in Jesus' time.

However, Judas was not the only disciple to let Jesus down. Most of them did, in one way or another. Matthew says, 'All the disciples left him and ran away'.

Even Peter, his right-hand man, let him down. Peter followed Jesus to the High Priest's house. In the courtyard, a servant girl questioned him twice. 'You were with Jesus,' she said.

Twice, he said that he had not been with him. Just at that moment, a cock crowed. Others in the yard may have noticed his accent. 'You cannot deny that you are one of them. You also come from Galilee.'

Peter became frightened: 'I swear that I am telling the truth. May God punish me if I am not! I do not know this man you are talking about.' Just then, a cock crowed for a second time.

Peter remembered what he had said while he was eating the Passover meal with Jesus: 'I will never leave you, even if the rest do. I will never deny you, even if I have to die.'

And Jesus replied, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will say three times that you do not know me.'

- 1 Copy out and complete this paragraph:
 Judas betrayed Jesus in the Garden of _____. He was paid _____ silver coins. Later, he was sorry for what he had done. He gave the coins back to the _____ and killed himself.
- 2 a) Draw an outline map of Jerusalem.
 b) What happened at (i) the Court of the Gentiles and (ii) Gethsemane?
- 3 a) Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. What is a kiss normally a symbol of?
 b) What did Judas make it a symbol of?
- 4 a) Imagine you were a disciple. Who would you have thought easiest to forgive – Peter or Judas? Explain your answer in detail.
 b) Describe an occasion when someone let you down.
 c) Did you manage to forgive them or not? Explain why you did or didn't.

23 On Trial

After Jesus' arrest, he was taken to the High Priest's house. We do not know the exact time but it was probably early in the morning. None of his followers would have been around to object to his arrest.

Trial by the Sanhedrin

They tried various ways of finding him guilty of something, but they could not find enough evidence. Finally, the High Priest, Caiaphas, asked the key question:

- 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed God?' 'I am,' answered Jesus, 'and you will all see the **Son of Man** seated on the right of the Almighty and coming with the clouds of heaven!'
The High priest tore his robes and said, 'We don't



Christ before the High Priest by Honthorst.

need any more **witnesses!** You heard his **blasphemy**. What is your decision?'
They all voted against him: he was guilty and should be put to death.

So, according to Mark, Jesus was found guilty of blasphemy. This meant he had spoken or acted as if he were God. This was a serious crime and people found guilty were stoned to death.

But the trial had not followed the normal Jewish rules:

- Trials at night were forbidden.
- Even Jewish writers have said that Jesus' words were not blasphemy.

However, they had found Jesus guilty. But only the Roman governor could sentence someone to death. So the **Sanhedrin** passed Jesus on to Pontius Pilate.

First Trial by Pontius Pilate

Early on Friday morning, the chief priests brought Jesus to Pilate. They now accused him of three things:

- Telling people not to pay their taxes.
- Claiming to be the Messiah, King of the Jews.
- Misleading the Jewish people.

So Pilate questioned Jesus. But he could not find him guilty on any of the charges which had been made against him. This made the priests angry. They then claimed that Jesus had been starting riots. Hearing this, Pilate decided to pass Jesus on to Herod Antipas. He was ruler of Galilee, where Jesus lived.

Trial by Herod Antipas

Herod got no further than Pilate had done, and simply sent Jesus straight back to him.

Second Trial by Pontius Pilate

Yet again, Pilate told the priests that Jesus was innocent. However, it seems there was a custom

to release one prisoner as it was Passover time. Whether Pilate gave the crowd a choice of prisoners is not clear. But the crowd wanted him to free a murderer called Barabbas. Some people think he may have been a Zealot.

Matthew records what happened next. Pilate got a bowl of water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. He told them, 'I am not responsible for the death of this man. This is your doing!'

Jesus' fate was sealed.



This Mexican is taking part in a Good Friday procession. His crown of thorns reminds people of the one which Jesus wore. (See John 19:1-2.)

Why was Jesus condemned?

Theory 1: there was a plot

► So the Pharisees and the chief priests met with the **Council** and said, 'What shall we do? Look at all the miracles this man is performing! If we let him go on this way, everyone will believe in him, and the Roman authorities will take action and destroy our Temple and our nation!'

... Caiaphas, who was High Priest that year, said, 'What fools you are! Don't you realize that it is better for you to let one man die for the people, instead of having the whole nation destroyed?'

From that day on the Jewish authorities made plans to kill Jesus. So Jesus did not travel openly in Judea, but left and went to a place near the desert...

John 11:47-50; 53-54

Theory 2: he was a sorcerer

► Yeshu practised **sorcery** and led astray Israel.

Talmud

This is the only piece of evidence from outside the Bible. Sorcery is the practice of black magic. But the punishment for this was being stoned to death – and Jesus was not stoned to death.

The Jewish authorities may have been afraid that Jesus was going to proclaim himself king. If people believed he was the Messiah, they might have joined him. There might be a revolt against the Romans. Then, the Romans would crush it and all Jews might suffer.

Theory 3: he was the 'Lamb of God'

► John the Baptist called Jesus the 'Lamb of God'. At Passover, Jewish people sacrificed a lamb. It reminded them that they had been freed from slavery in Egypt.

In the same way, Christians believe that Jesus' sacrifice gave them freedom. His death freed Christians from God's punishment for their sin. If it is not forgiven, a person is separated from God forever.

1 Match up the name on the left with the description on the right.

Pilate	the convicted murderer
Caiaphas	the ruler of Galilee
Herod Antipas	the Roman governor
Barabbas	the High Priest

- 2 a) Describe the part which each man in question 1 played in the trials of Jesus.
b) Which charge against Jesus was most important for (i) Caiaphas and (ii) Pontius Pilate? Explain how you decided.
- 3 a) Which of the following people do you think was responsible for Jesus being put to death: Pontius Pilate; Caiaphas; the Roman Emperor; the Sanhedrin; Barabbas; Herod Antipas? Give a reason for each choice you make.
b) Who else, if anyone, was responsible? Give reasons for any choice you make.
- 4 a) If the disciples ran away, how do we know about the trials?
b) Are these accounts likely to be accurate? Give a reason.
c) Would the disciples' accounts have been more accurate? Explain your answer.