

The Final Days of Jesus: A 40 Day Reading Guide

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It has been said of Mark's Gospel that it is a passion narrative with an extended introduction. The same could be said of all the Gospels. In each account, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John introduce Jesus of Nazareth as the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. In various ways they display his divine power and human personality. Yet, with each evangelist, the focus of each Gospel turns to the final and climactic week of his life, the days leading up to Christ's execution and his miraculous resurrection from the dead.

To help us understand this final week of Jesus' life, Andreas Köstenberger and Justin Taylor have provided the church with an orderly account of Jesus' death and resurrection. Broken down into forty events, they have written an annotated guide to the Passion Week. This outline depends exclusively on their book *The Final Days of Jesus (TFDJ)* and commends a forty-day devotional that Christians and non-Christians alike can read to better appreciate and understand all that happened in "the most important week of the most important person who ever lived."

You can download the devotional [here](#). You can buy the book at our bookstore for \$6---that's 1/3 the price on Amazon. (That's a good a deal!!)

To help you as you use this devotional reading guide, please note a few things:

1. The forty events of Jesus's final week are broken down into forty days of reading. Some days of reading will cover two events. Other events will take two or more days to consider (e.g., Jesus teaching in John 13–17).
2. With a few exceptions, each New Testament reading should take less than ten minutes and is intended to be useful for personal devotions or family worship.
3. The Old Testament passages are citations either quoted in the New Testament passage of the day or provide pertinent background information about the events taking place (e.g., the New Covenant or Passover).
4. Days 1–7 (Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday in the Passion Week) must be read in your own Bible, with supplementation in *TFDJ*. The full text of Scripture begins in *TFDJ* on Day 8 (Wednesday) and continues until Days 39 and 40.
5. On Days 1–7, you should select either Matthew's Gospel or Mark's gospel and supplement your reading with Luke and John. If you have more time, you can read all Scripture passages on the given day, but on Day 7, for instance, that would include four chapters of Scripture.

6. Beginning on Day 8, you can continue to read in your own Bible and supplement your reading with *TFDJ*, or, more simply, you can read the assigned pages of *TFDJ*. By reading *TFDJ* you can seamlessly weave between Scripture and commentary. If time is short, focus on the New Testament reading.

7. The Old Testament promises are not necessary for reading but provide illumination for those pastors or parents who may desire to know more of the background to each event. You may also find other Old Testament references by keeping alert to the cross-references in your own Bible.

8. Three other notes: (a) On Day 2, the predictions of Jesus's death have been included in brackets, though they do not occur in the final week. (b) Be advised: because John 13–17 in *TFDJ* is not versified, the starting and ending point on Days 11–15 are ambiguous but not unrecognizable. (c) On Days 33–34, a selection of exilic psalms have been included to help you feel the sorrow of Israel's exile and Christ's death.

9. Most importantly, as you read, pray and give praise. Do not simply read these events with an eye to historical scholarship, but read with a heart that marvels at the sinless Son of God who laid down his life for you. If you do not know Jesus as your personal Savior, ask the Lord to open your eyes to behold the wonder of his law, and even more, the gift of his Son.

Please go [here](#) for the reading plan.

For His Glory and your joy,

Pastor David