



**40** **DAYS TO**  
**ETERNITY**  
**THE ROAD HOME**



**A**s Christians, we do a tremendous job celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

We go all-out in amazement of the virgin birth of the one whom God sent to rescue us from our sin. The Savior who was promised so long ago had finally come!

Likewise, at Easter, we pull out all the stops to celebrate that Jesus indeed conquered death as he promised he would to pay the final penalty for sin against God. He taught that if we believe in him and his work on the cross, our eternity in heaven could be assured. There certainly isn't any greater hope that we can have in the fallen world in which we find ourselves. While it is great to celebrate these things, Jesus' story doesn't end there...

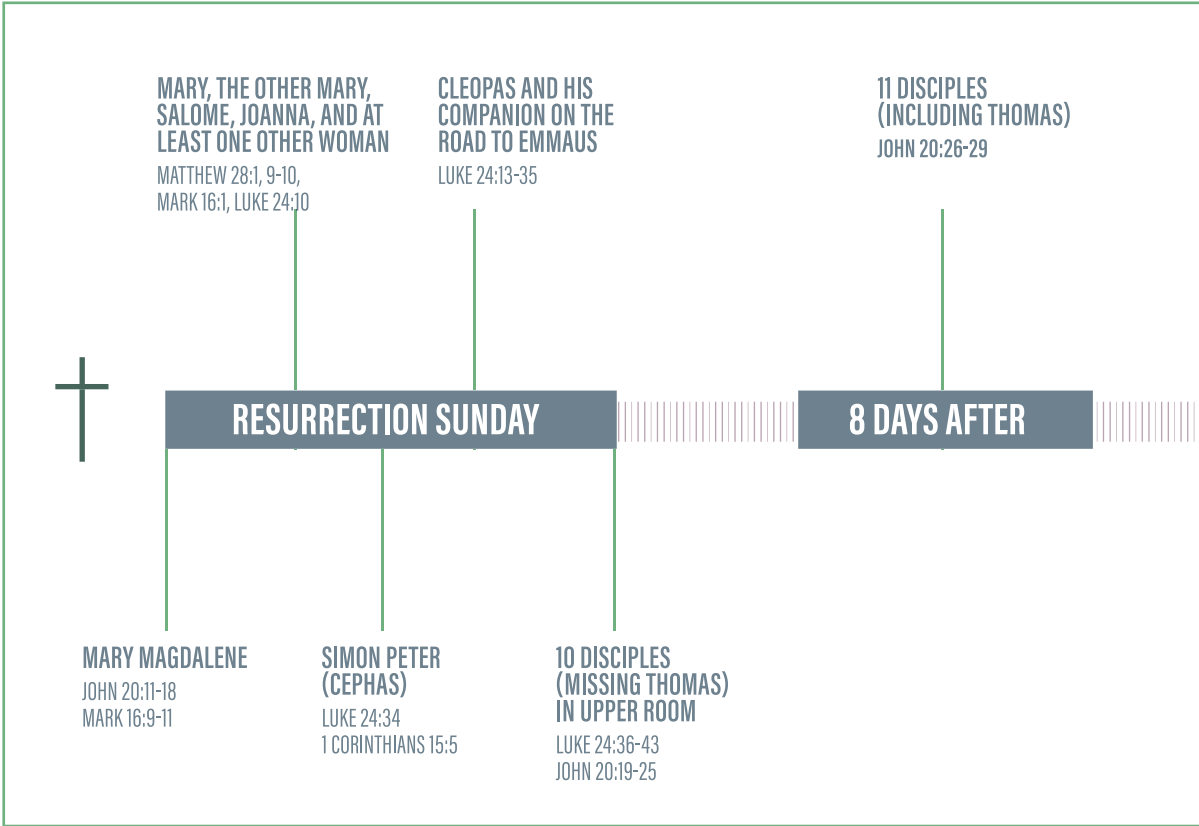
After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and followers for 40 days. In close study of those appearances, it is clear that Jesus didn't show up just to say, "I told you so!" He came purposefully and left an impression on his disciples that would compel them to live with passion, purpose and perseverance. It was an extremely important time for the disciples as they were about to take his place in the world and begin to carry the message to others. Following these interactions, the single most important event of

our Christian faith took place - Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. From that position of power he rules the world today. And it is from there that he will come back to rule again.

This truth is something that is certainly worth celebrating as much as or more than Christmas and Easter. Why? Because the ascension is what sets Christianity apart from every other religious belief or system. Only we celebrate a Savior who lives! So, on this journey through the final few weeks of Jesus' earthly ministry, let's learn about his most critical lessons and celebrate the single most important aspect of our Christian faith.

His birth was miraculous. The crucifixion was atoning. The resurrection was victorious. The ascension is eternity-changing.

## **LET'S CELEBRATE!**



# JESUS' LAST FORT

**DISCIPLES AT  
MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE**

MATTHEW 28:16-20  
MARK 16:15-18

**JAMES**

1 CORINTHIANS 15:7

**OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS**

**7 DISCIPLES AT SEA  
OF TIBERIAS (GALILEE)**

JOHN 21:1-23

**500 BROTHERS  
AT ONE TIME**

1 CORINTHIANS 15:6

**DAY 40**

**DISCIPLES AT THE MOUNT  
OF OLIVES WHERE HE  
ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN**

LUKE 24:50-53, ACTS 1:3-11



# 40 DAYS ON EARTH

**MARY MAGDALENE** (John 20:11-18) - Mary's last name most likely indicates that she was from Magdala, a city on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. She first encountered Jesus when he cast out seven demons from her, and her life was forever changed (Luke 8:2). Mary witnessed most of what took place surrounding Jesus' crucifixion, and was also one of the first to witness the resurrected Christ. It was Mary Magdalene whom Jesus sent to tell the disciples about his resurrection.

**THE 'OTHER' MARY** (Mark 16:1) This was Jesus' and James' mother.

**SALOME** (Matthew 28:1) - This was the mother of the disciples James and John.

**JOANNA** (Luke 24:10) - Joanna was an upper-class Jewish woman who married Chuza, an influential member of the staff of Herod Antipas, the Roman-appointed ruler of Galilee. At some stage in her life Jesus cured her of an unspecified illness. In Luke 8:1-3, she is noted as providing for Jesus and the disciples. She knew Jesus

well and was committed to his mission.

**CEPHAS** (1 Corinthians 15:5) - This is Peter, who denied Jesus three times. Cephas is his name in Aramaic, which translates to Peter. In Luke 24:34, he is called Simon.

**CLEOPAS** (Luke 24:13-35) - He was a disciple of Jesus who was traveling on a road to Emmaus with another man when Jesus met them.

#### **THE DISCIPLES AT THE TIME OF JESUS' RESURRECTION**

- Originally, Jesus chose twelve disciples: Peter, James, John, Andrew, Bartholomew (Nathanael), James (the Lesser or Younger), Judas, Jude (Thaddeus), Matthew (Levi), Philip, Simon the Zealot, and Thomas. After Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, he hung himself (Matthew 24:14-16) before Jesus was crucified. After Jesus ascended into heaven, Matthias was chosen to replace Judas (Acts 1:15-26).



## KEY VERSES

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. - Luke 24:15-16

And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. - Luke 24:19-21

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. - Luke 24:30-31

## THE SETTING

On a road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) Although it is generally believed that Emmaus was Northwest of Jerusalem, no one can be sure. It is clear, however, that Emmaus was situated seven miles from Jerusalem, so they were out for quite a walk!

## KEY POINTS

It had been three days since Jesus died. These disciples had given up hope that Jesus was the one who would ultimately redeem Israel. Despite the fact that they had heard reports that the tomb was empty and Jesus was alive, they didn't believe it. They leave us with the impression that they were disappointed in God because things didn't go the way they expected them to go.

As the disciples walked and talked, Luke says in 24:16 that "their eyes were kept from recognizing" Jesus. He does not say that "they didn't recognize him." In other words, this was intentional. This wasn't a fault of their eyes.

The road to Emmaus marks a literal journey of two followers of Jesus and also a figurative journey of our walk with him.

## KEY TERMS

**BELIEF:** an acceptance that a statement is true or that something exists; trust, faith, or confidence in someone or something



## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

When did you stop knowing about Jesus and start believing in him? If you haven't yet, what is holding you back?

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Have you ever doubted Jesus when things didn't go as you had planned? If so, what were the circumstances? If you simply doubt him and his work, what is one thing that you are willing to do to grow in your understanding of him and his desire for your life?

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Describe a circumstance when it was clear to you that Jesus was involved in your life.

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What can you do to share your faith in Christ and his faithfulness in your life with others who doubt him?

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**KEY VERSES**

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. - John 21:3

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. - John 21:4-6

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. - John 21:12

**THE SETTING**

Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-23) - Also known as the Sea of Galilee, this body of water isn't actually a sea but a fresh-water lake where Jesus walked on water. It sits about 700 feet below sea level, the lowest fresh-water lake in the world. It is only the second-lowest lake overall, coming in behind the Dead Sea, which is a salt-water lake. It is at the Sea of Tiberias where Jesus restored Peter.

**KEY TERMS**

**OBEDIENCE:** compliance with an order, request or law; submission to another's authority

**CALLING:** a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action, especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

In what area of your life are you most impatient when waiting on Jesus?  
In what ways can you be more obedient in these areas?.....

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What is it you feel God made you to do?  
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How can you prioritize your life to do more of what God made you to do?

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**KEY VERSES:**

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." - John 21:15-17

Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" - John 21:21

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

Do you deny Jesus and his claims to be the only way to an eternal relationship with God? If so, why do you think you are listening to this message today? .....

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**THE SETTING:**

Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-23) - Also known as the Sea of Galilee, this body of water isn't actually a sea but a fresh-water lake where Jesus walked on water. It sits about 700 feet below sea level, the lowest fresh-water lake in the world. It is only the second lowest lake overall, coming in behind the Dead Sea, which is a salt-water lake. The Sea of Tiberias is where Jesus came to the seven disciples as they fished.

**KEY TERMS:**

There are two Greek words used in this passage that are translated as love:

**AGAPE:** highest kind of love; sacrificing love; divine love

**PHILEO:** love of a friend; fondness of another



Are there areas of your life in which you deny Jesus? Maybe making money or possessions your god? Maybe prioritizing your earthly relationships over that with God? . . . . .

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Do you really love Jesus? . . . . .

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What can you do to share your faith in Christ and his faithfulness in your life with others who doubt him? . . . . .

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## KEY VERSES

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” – Acts 1:8

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. – Acts 1:9

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” – Acts 1:10

## THE SETTING

Mount called Olivet (Acts 1:12) – This mountain is also referred to as Mount of Olives and Bethany in Luke 24:50. It is a mountain ridge that sits east of Jerusalem, and the place from which Jesus ascended into heaven. During Jesus’ time on earth, the slopes of the ridge were covered in olive trees. Today, the slopes are home to more than 150,000 Jewish graves.

## KEY TERMS

Power: the ability to do something or act in a particular way; ability to produce an effect



**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

Do you deny Jesus and his claims to be the only way to an eternal relationship with God? If so, why do you think you are listening to this message today? .....

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In Acts 1:8, Jesus states that his followers will be his witnesses. That can be a good thing or a bad thing. What kind of witness are you for Christ in your neighborhood, school, workplace and home? Why? .....

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What are three things that you can do in your home to be a better witness for Christ? .....

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What are three things that you can do in your area of influence to be a better witness for Christ? .....

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What hope does the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father give you today? .....

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