

*An Easter Walk*

From Palm Sunday  
To The Ascension  
Forty Devotions

Zan Marie Steadham



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## *Introduction*

Easter was a colorful time when I was a child. From the color of the crinkly artificial grass we chose for our ribbon-bedecked Easter baskets to the rainbow hues of our boiled eggs. The ritual of dyeing eggs was one my sister, brother, and I looked forward to from Palm Sunday to the Saturday before Easter. From the basic red, yellow, blue, and green food colorings, we concocted lovely turquoise, sunset red-orange and beautiful chartreuse. Mother even allowed us to dip the last few in all the colors to produce a startling shade of muddy gray.

If we thought beyond dyeing eggs, we wondered how much chocolate would show up in our baskets on Easter morning. None of us really stopped to think about the purpose of Easter beyond studying our Sunday School lesson. Christmas was a different matter. Even now we spend much more time thinking and preparing for Christmas than for Easter. Some people start shopping during the after-Christmas sales. Others wait until Christmas Eve. Either way, you cannot ignore our culture's emphasis on preparing for Christmas.

What about Easter? After all, Easter *is* the reason there is a Christmas. Preparing for Easter is the focus of the Season of Lent. Many see it as a time of repentance for sins committed during the year and reflection on Christ's sacrifice. *An Easter Walk from Palm Sunday to the Ascension* was written to contemplate Christ's



purpose and mission and to consider the importance of following Christ's steps throughout the year. Whether we are on the road to Emmaus as a believer who doesn't fully understand and believe everything Jesus has said, or on the road to Damascus as an adamant unbeliever, or somewhere in between, we can all experience the Living Lord during our Easter walk and for the rest of our lives.

Many churches recognize this season though they celebrate it differently. Whatever our tradition is, it is vitally important that we prepare our hearts and minds to worship Christ each Easter. Dr. Steve Davis challenged our church to do this type of preparation during the 2005 Season of Lent. My personal response to this challenge was studying the events of Holy Week. As I read the scripture depicting each event, I realized that I had to respond to what I was reading and began to write my responses down. I hope my reactions to the story of Christ's Easter walk will lead you to prepare to worship Christ more fully and deeply.

*An Easter Walk* follows Christ step-by-step on His last trip to Jerusalem and the Temple; to His last sermon and last prayers; and His glorious victory over sin, death, and separation from God. Following His Easter walk shows why He alone is worthy of our praise, why He alone is the Savior. The events are presented in a logical day-by-day sequence.

The devotions begin with a verse from the scripture recounting that event. At the end, the reader is invited to a fuller walk using the full scripture references that were used to prepare each devotion. The forty devotions can

be used one a day during Lent, starting on Ash Wednesday as is practiced in many Catholic and Protestant churches or on Clean Monday (the Monday after Ash Wednesday) as is practiced in many Orthodox churches. Please note that in the tradition of Lent starting with Ash Wednesday, the forty days do not count the six Sundays between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Traditionally, these Sundays are focused on topics concerning the Resurrection in honor of Easter. I have included a poem for each of these Sundays and for Easter Sunday. The devotions may be read any time the reader wants to appreciate the sacrifice Our Lord made for us.

May *An Easter Walk* help us all to prepare our hearts, minds, and souls to be a temple for the Holy Spirit. May it help us to prepare our lives so we may be receptive to Christ's love. May we clean out the distractions of things, jobs, fears, and worries to be usable in Christ's will. May *An Easter Walk* help us all to experience the Living Lord in our lives.





*Ad Gloriam Dei*  
To the Glory of God



Day 1

*Triumphal Entry*

**“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

**“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” Luke 19:38**

Who was this man riding into Jerusalem this morning? Why were the crowds so enthusiastic? Many knew He had raised Lazarus from the dead. They were curious. Amazed by such power, they shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” Luke’s account adds, “Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest!”

Did they really want peace or did they want a conqueror to throw hated Rome out of their country? He answered them by riding on a donkey, not a horse, because the kings of Israel rode horses during war and donkeys during peace. He had repeatedly said, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

What solutions are you seeking for the turmoil in your life—work, bills, illness, family? Would a peaceful resolution to all the conflicts be one of your desires? There is only one source of peace. During our Easter



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walk, may we all turn to Jesus, the Prince of Peace for He is the one source of true peace. May we all join in and say, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”



**For a further walk, see**

Matthew 21:1-11

Mark 11:1-11

Luke 19:29-44

John 12:12-19

Day 2

*Cleaning the Temple*

**“It is written,” He said to them, “‘My house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’” Luke 19:46**

**Don’t you know you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16**

Can a sacred place be defiled? According to Christ, the answer is yes. As He entered the Temple in Jerusalem His last Passover Week, He found merchants changing money for the many pilgrims and selling doves for the sacrifices. Noise, argument, and greed were defiling the sacred place. Jesus cleansed the Temple for true worship and the dwelling of the Most High God. With a righteous anger that surely startled even those who had traveled with Him for three years, Jesus overturned the tables and scattered the moneychangers. The high priests had profited greatly from this defilement and now Jesus had called them to account.

Holy Week is a good time to assess ourselves as the dwelling place or the temple of the Holy Spirit. What do we need to clean out of our lives, hearts, souls, and



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minds to be a fitting temple? What do we need to overturn to be receptive to God's love? Clean out the distractions of things, money, jobs, fear, worries, and stress. During our Easter walk, may Christ make us usable for His Holy will!



### **For a further walk, see**

Matthew 21:12-13

Mark 11:15-17

Luke 19:45-46

### **Related Passages**

1 Corinthians 3:16

2 Corinthians 6:16

Day 3

*By What Authority?*

**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?” Matthew 21:23**

The chief priests and elders of the Temple were on a mission Holy Week. They sought to discredit the upstart Galilean teacher whom the people adored. Jesus’ triumphal entry on Palm Sunday had horrified and energized them. So, a group came to Him in the Temple and asked one of the central questions concerning Him—“By what authority do you teach?”

Jesus answered with a question—“By what authority did John baptize—Heaven or Hell?” As with many of His questions, Jesus pointed to the heart of the matter. They saw the problem and knew either answer would hurt their status. If they answered by Heaven, they had to explain why they were not among John’s followers. If they answered by Hell, they would anger John’s large numbers of followers. Their cowardly answer was, “We don’t know.”



Jesus proceeded to show their attitude through two parables. In the story of the two sons, He showed the wickedness of hypocrisy and reminded the leaders of their claim to follow God while condemning other sinners. In the second story, He showed the murderous greed of the tenants who killed the heir and reminded the leaders of their insistence that Jesus could not be the Son of God.

On our Easter walk, may we return to the original question—by what authority did Jesus speak, live, die, and save? We all must answer for ourselves this central question. Our answer will show by what authority we live our lives and our lives will show our answer.



**For a further walk, see**

Matthew 21:23-41

Mark 11:27-33, 12:1-9

Luke 20:1-16

Day 4

*Questioning Jesus*

**Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch Him in His words. Mark 12:13**

As Holy Week continued and more people joined the crowd around Jesus, the leaders (Herodians, Pharisees, and Sadducees) tried to trap Him with tricky questions. Their agenda was simple. They wanted to discredit Him with the crowd and end the idea that Jesus could be the Messiah. They came with their assumptions that He could be tricked either into admitting that He was not God or in provoking the Romans into arresting Him.

The Pharisees and Herodians posed the first question. Should we pay taxes to Caesar? The Pharisees would gain power if the answer was no and the Herodians would gain if the answer was yes. Each sought to use Jesus to strengthen their position among the people. Jesus asked for a coin and showed that Caesar made it so giving it back would be reasonable—but He also added that what God gave should be returned to God. This confounded both groups.

Next, the Sadducees tried. Their assumption that there were no resurrections prompted a question about how to



interpret and apply a little-used Levitical law—which of seven successive brothers would be married to the same wife in Heaven. Again, Jesus referred them to the source—God. Since God declared Himself to be God to the Patriarchs long after their physical death, they were alive and resurrected. His questioners were again dismayed and frustrated in their attempt to trip Him.

The third was a question from a scribe. He didn't come with the usual assumptions and asked what was the Greatest Commandment? When Jesus summarized the first four commandments in loving God and the last six in loving others, the scribe agreed. Jesus commended him for understanding that these attitudes were far more important than burnt offerings and sacrifices.

During our Easter walk, what do we want to ask Jesus? We must lay all our assumptions about His answers at His Cross. Ask, and it will be answered.



**For a further walk, see**

Matthew 22:15-40

Mark 12:13-34

Luke 20:20-40

*During His Easter Walk*

He found

No kingdom of men,  
    But one of Heaven.  
No gold for a crown,  
    But one of thorns.  
No bone was broken,  
    Only His heart.

He gave His life in sacrifice  
To save our lives and souls.





*An Easter Walk*

