

**The Easter Story for Internationals & the Home: Bible Selections,
from the NLT, adapted by Howard Killion, Ph.D., revised May 2009,
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Reading parts (large): Narrator, Jesus

Reading parts (moderate): Peter, Pilate, Caiaphas

Reading parts (small): John, Judas, Thomas, guard, servant girl, accuser #2 & accuser #3, criminal #1 and criminal #2, Cleopas and another follower of Jesus

Reading parts (groups): disciples, Jesus' followers, Pharisees, soldiers, guards, false witnesses, Religious Council/leaders, crowd, women followers, angels

The Resurrection (Mark 16)

Narrator: ¹ Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body. ² Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. ³ On the way they were asking each other,

Women followers: "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"

(Matthew 28)

Narrator: ² Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. ³ His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

(Luke 24)

Narrator: ² When the women got to the tomb, they found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ³ So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. ⁵ The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked,

Angels: “Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶ He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day.”

(Matthew 28)

Narrator: ⁸ The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angels’ message. ⁹ And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them,

Jesus: “Don’t be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.”

The Report of the Guard (Matthew 28)

Narrator: ¹¹ As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. ¹² A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. ¹³ They told the soldiers,

Religious leaders: “You must say, ‘Jesus’ disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.’ ¹⁴ If the governor hears about it, we’ll stand up for you so you won’t get in trouble.”

Narr: ¹⁵ So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

The Empty Tomb (Luke 24)

Narrator: ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. ¹¹ But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn’t believe it. ¹² However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look....

(John 20)

Narrator: ³ Peter and the other disciple (John) started out for the tomb. ⁴ They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. ⁸ Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—⁹ for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then they went home.

The Walk to Emmaus (Luke 24)

Narrator: ¹³ That same day two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. ¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him. ¹⁷ He asked them,

Jesus: “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?”

Narr: They stopped short, sadness written across their faces.¹⁸ Then one of them, Cleopas, replied,

Cleopas: “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.”

Jesus:¹⁹ “What things?”

Cleopas & other follower: “The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth. He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people.²⁰ But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him.²¹ We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.²² Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report.²³ They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive!²⁴ Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.”

Jesus:²⁵ “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures.²⁶ Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?”

Narr:²⁷ Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.²⁸ By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on,²⁹ but they begged him,

Cleopas & other follower: “Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.”

Narr: So he went home with them.³⁰ As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them.³¹ Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!³² They said to each other,

Cleopas & other follower: “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?”

Narr:³³ And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them,³⁴ who said,

Disciples: “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.”

Jesus Appears to the Disciples (Luke 24)

Narrator:³⁵ Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.³⁶ And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them.

Jesus: “Peace be with you.”

Narr: ³⁷ But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!

Jesus: ³⁸ “Why are you frightened? Why are your hearts filled with doubt? ³⁹ Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.”

Narr: ⁴⁰ As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them,

Jesus: “Do you have anything here to eat?”

Narr: ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he ate it as they watched. ⁴⁴ Then he said,

Jesus: “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

Narr: ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ And he said,

Jesus: “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. ⁴⁷ It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’ ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of all these things. ⁴⁹ And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas (John 20)

Narrator: ²⁴ One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. ²⁵ They told him,

Disciples: “We have seen the Lord!”

Thomas: “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

Narr: ²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. He said,

Jesus: “Peace be with you.”

Narr: ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas,

Jesus: “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

Thomas: ²⁸ “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus: ²⁹ “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples in Galilee (John 21)

Narrator: ¹ Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. ² Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. ³ Simon Peter said to the others,

Peter: “I’m going fishing.”

Other disciples: “We’ll come, too.”

Narr: So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night. ⁴ At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. ⁵ He called out,

Jesus: “Fellows, have you caught any fish?”

Peter & other disciples: “No!”

Jesus: ⁶ “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!”

Narr: So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it. ⁷ Then the disciple Jesus loved (that is, John) said to Peter,

John: “It’s the Lord!”

Narr: When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. ⁸ The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. ⁹ When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

Jesus: ¹⁰ “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught.”

Narr: ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

Jesus: ¹² “Now come and have some breakfast!”

Narr: None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. ¹⁴ This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead. ¹⁵ After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter,

Jesus: “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

Peter: “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

Jesus: “Then feed my lambs.”

Narr: ¹⁶ Jesus repeated the question:

Jesus: “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter: “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

Jesus: “Then take care of my sheep.”

Narr: ¹⁷ A third time Jesus asked him,

Peter: “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Narr: Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said,

Peter: “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.”

Jesus: “Then feed my sheep. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go.”

Narr: ¹⁹ Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death (that is, crucifixion) he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him,

Jesus: “Follow me.”

Narr: ²⁰ Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, “Lord, who will betray you?” (That is, John.) ²¹ Peter asked Jesus,

Peter: “What about him, Lord?”

Jesus: ²² “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me.”

Narr: ²³ So the rumor spread among the community of believers that this disciple (that is, John) wouldn’t die. But that isn’t what Jesus said at all. He only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

John: ²⁴ This disciple, that is, I myself am the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And we know that my account of these things is accurate. ²⁵ Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.

Jesus Commissions the Disciples (Acts 1)

Narrator: ³ During the forty days after Jesus’ crucifixion, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.... ⁶ So when the disciples were with Jesus, they kept asking him,

Disciples: “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

Jesus: ⁷ “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

(Matthew 28)

Jesus: ¹⁸ “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Jesus Ascends Up to Heaven (Acts 1)

Narrator: ⁹ After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. ¹⁰ As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them.

Angels: ¹¹ “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

Conclusion (John 20)

Narrator: ³⁰ The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.