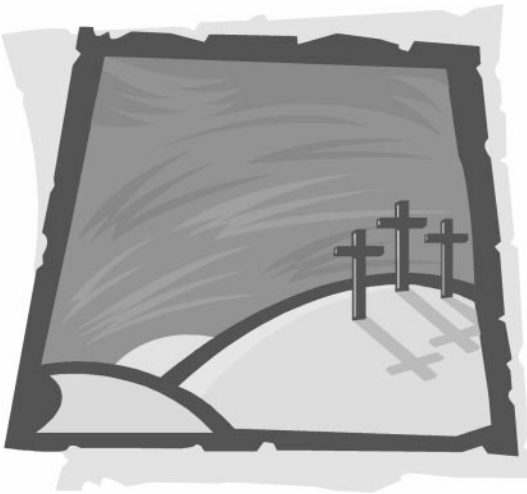


CROSS POINT®

Holiday

SCRIPTS

Spring 2001



The Seven Last Days of Christ

Synopsis: This multi-scene sketch uses the book of John as the foundation for tracing the last 7 days of Christ's earthly life. Looking mostly through the eyes of disciples and an anonymous narrator, we walk through the major events in a casual, visual, and interactive narrative. From the raising of Lazarus in chapter 12, to the resurrection of Christ in chapter 21, we examine each day and its significance for the Passion Week.

Time: 24 minutes (without any added music). Can be easily divided into 2 or 3 parts as noted in the scripts.

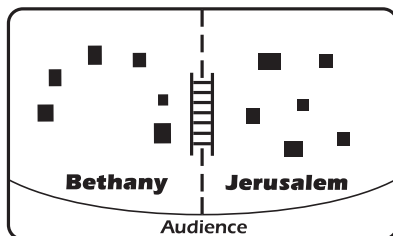
Characters:

Narrator — An anonymous observer who lived close enough to Jesus and his disciples to observe a great deal of their lives. The narrator is the cohesive force for the entire script, and, as existing in both the 1st and 21st centuries, is the only one who interacts directly with the audience.

Five actors — These are very flexible characters who play whatever parts might be needed in a given scene. Although they're often disciples, they are not specifically identified. We've included extensive blocking notes to allow you to take advantage of a dual stage setup with both Bethany and Jerusalem, and the visual advantage of creative stage movement.

Props: Ladder, Costumes

Stage Setup:



Direction


Script


0 minutes

Author's note: Scene opens on an empty stage with just the narrator and an eight foot step ladder in the center. The narrator uses this introduction to explain the historical setting and stage setup.

- **Narrator:** The week started and ended with an empty tomb. Oh, you've heard about the empty tomb. The one on Easter morning. Maybe you didn't know there were actually two empty tombs that complicated things. The first tomb was here, in Bethany ... and the other one is over there, in Jerusalem; just a couple miles away. And in between are the seven last days of Christ.

Blocking: Here the narrator climbs up on the stepladder to simulate a balcony overlooking the house of Mary and Martha in Bethany.

 *Author's note: The narrator's an engaging personality. He or she works very hard to keep the audience involved. He's blunt, lighthearted, and slightly sarcastic with a dry sense of humor*

 **Technical note:** Lights dim briefly to separate each day.

Blocking: The Bethany set is on the left side of the stage. 1,2,3, and 4 are all crowded against an imaginary door with 5 on the other side keeping them out. 1 begins immediately after narrator stops.

Narrator: Most of you know the seven last words of Christ. But I'm here today to tell you another story. The story of the last week of our Lord. Because he didn't end up on the cross accidentally, or all at once. The storm had been brewing for a long time. But it wasn't until that last week that the final pieces fell in place. I guess I got a pretty good look at everything from right here. See, I happened to live next door to a fairly significant family here in town.

1 minute

You remember, Mary and Martha? And their brother Lazarus? That's their house right down there. And living where I do it wasn't hard to keep track of things. Words just seem to waft their way up here. And how could I plug my eyes and ears? So I got the whole scoop. And I'll tell you just how it happened.

Saturday

Let's start with Saturday, the Sabbath. Six days before the crucifixion of Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth. For convenience we'll call it D minus 6. Saturday, but Friday's comin'. For it was really that day the count-down began.

- 1: Come on, just a peek. Then we'll go.
- 2: We just want to see him.
- 5: Jesus isn't here. He went away.
- 3: Not Jesus, Lazarus. Rumor has it he's alive.
- 5: So what if he is?
- 4: Then send him out. We want to see for ourselves.
- 5: He went with Jesus.
- 1: Where'd they go?
- 5: I'm not sure.
- 2: When will they be back?
- 5: Who knows? They don't tell me these things.

2 minutes

Narrator: And so it went. Visitors. All hours of the day and night. Some wanted to see Jesus. But some were more interested in Lazarus. After all, he was the big news. Dead, and then alive. The smart ones found Lazarus, and ended up finding Jesus too. But many were just skeptics. Sent from Jerusalem. See up until this time, the chief priests and Pharisees up there had been able to come up with some sort of explanation for most of Jesus' miracles. This one was tougher. I mean you had a former dead guy walking around. This made the people up in Jerusalem very nervous. For weeks they'd been scrambling to come up with a good spin on the story.

5: Well, what'd you find out?

1: He's alive alright. Alive and well.

4: What are the people saying?

1: It's mixed. Some are still skeptical, but many are believing. It's hard to refute.

3 minutes

3: Leave the conclusions to us if you will. You may go.

4: This can't go on. The whole nation will go after him.

5: And this is not the time to make Pilate nervous. We can't have public riots. Especially with revolutionaries in the crowd.

3: That's right. If he fears a riot, he'll bring in his own guards.

4: Which means the end of everything we've accomplished. We'll lose what little freedom we have.

5: No we're not going backwards. There comes a time when the good of the many outweighs the good of the one. Now is one of those times.

4: What do you mean? He's too popular to arrest. Then we'd have another kind of riot.


5: No, not Jesus ... Lazarus.

◀ **Blocking:** 1-5 freeze at the end of the door scene and the attention shifts back to narrator on the ladder. Toward the end of his line they move discreetly behind the ladder to the other side of the stage where they seat themselves as Pharisees in a rough semi-circle on simple staging. They're questioning a witness.

◀ **Blocking:** One exits.


◀ **Blocking:** Five stands here as if hatching a scheme.

Blocking: 2-5 freeze again. Attention shifts back to narrator.

 **Technical note:** Lights dim briefly.

Blocking: When the lights come up again, the narrator is again half way up the ladder with the actors of the left side. When he finishes this line, the actors snap to life, walking toward the audience before stopping to speak.

Blocking: During this line actors 1-3 move over to the right side of the stage for their next interaction. One and 2 mime untying a colt.

 *Author's note: Two is trying to reason his way into this thing while 1 gets the idea to simply do what Jesus said.*

3: What has he done?

5: Don't you see it? Treason. Participating in a hoax with the goal to overthrow our government. It's a capital offense.

4 minutes

Narrator: Saturday, the Sabbath. A day of peace and rest. But things were not quiet here in Bethany. Or up the hill. For the Jewish rulers got a preview of what they would have to explain one week later. Not one, but two resurrections. Don't forget it was D minus 6.

Sunday

Sunday, the first of the week. In a few days the big feasts would begin. First, the Day of Passover on Thursday, after which we always celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which went on for a week. I say we, because we all went. Everyone who could, crammed themselves into Jerusalem for that week. And Jesus was no exception. He left that morning with his 12 disciples and everyone was talking. When they got to Bethphage, a small village a mile up the road, he stopped abruptly, and pulled aside two of his disciples. How do I know? For some reason, that morning, I decided to follow along and watch.

5 minutes

Jesus (4): I need you to go into the village. As you enter you'll see a colt. Untie it and bring it to me. And if anyone questions you just say, "The Lord needs it."

Narrator: I guess the two had learned not to question him, because they did it just like he said.

3: Hey, what are you doing? That's my colt.

2: Well you see it's kinda hard to explain. No doubt you've heard of the prophet Jesus? He's from Galilee, but he's been getting a lot of exposure down here. In fact, if you don't —

1: (to 2) Wait, hang on. Let me try something ...(to 3) The Lord needs it?

3: Oh, why didn't you say so? Go ahead.

Narrator: So they brought it back and laid their garments on it. By now there seemed to be more and more people gathering around. Most of them had either heard about Lazarus or were there when it happened. No doubt about it, they were convinced. We all were. I

6 minutes

don't think anybody really knew what it all meant. It was just fun. Exciting. I hadn't cheered about any thing for years. But someone started shouting "Hosanna, Save us Now," and we all joined in. It just felt good. Really good. Of course, not everybody liked it. All at once the column stopped and some Pharisees were in the road.

5: Rabbi, we implore you to stop! Do you hear what your disciples are saying? Quiet them immediately!

Jesus (4): Yes, I hear them. Noisy, aren't they. But do you see those stones? If I hushed them I'm afraid those stones would take up the song. Would that be better for you?

Narrator: Well they didn't like that at all, but what could they do? The crowd had the momentum. And so we continued. (1-3 start to cheer, narrator yells over them) So we got there at the outskirts of this huge city and everyone was cheering and shouting and singing. And all at once — (silence) Jesus stops.

7 minutes

Narrator: And he went on grieving for a long time. So after a while people began to leave. They didn't know what to do. Well, we knew what to do with a cheering Messiah. We were getting pretty good at that. But not one that weeps. Somehow that didn't fit. So we left. One by one. Till Jesus was all alone up here. And sometime after dark I heard them return to Bethany. Down there. In the courtyard. Jesus and the 12 returned a lot more quietly than they'd left. In fact, if not for a barking dog 3 houses down, I would have missed it. And so Sunday came to an end. You call it Palm Sunday. Or perhaps D minus 5. It was Sunday, but Friday was comin'.

First Break Point for Three Part Division (or Natural Music Break)


8 minutes

◀ **Blocking:** As the narrator speaks, actors move discreetly to the right side and set up their next scene as frozen figures. 1-4 are going one direction and 5 is blocking their way. As soon as the narrator finishes, they snap to life.

◀ **Blocking:** At the silence Jesus (4) stops, turns toward the audience, gazes at them, then kneels down and begins to quietly sob. Allow enough time for this to develop without being rushed.

◀ **Blocking:** As the narrator reads this line he moves from the stage level back to the ladder and the one by one turn their backs away from Jesus and the audience.



 **Technical note:** Lights dim briefly.

Blocking: Narrator starts this line on the “Bethany” side of the stage. Actors are frozen in place behind him in another roadside rest scene and snap to life on cue.

Blocking: After this line, Jesus moves to the right side of the stage and starts to study the leaves of an imaginary fig tree. He then turns away from it in disgust and freezes.

Blocking: As 3 finishes this scene, all actors freeze. The narrator picks up the action by walking over to where the “tree” was. As he talks, they assemble around the ladder for their next scene. Actor 4 sits this one out since we don’t actually show Jesus clearing the temple. We just show the actors watching him clear the temple. Make sure they focus on the same spot.

Monday

Narrator: The next morning, Monday, dawned clear and cool. I still remember because I was putting an extra wrap on when I saw them leave. This time a lot more quietly. Word had gotten out about what happened the day before, so people kinda backed off. But Jesus had some kind of strange determination to return the 2 miles back to the big city; even though everybody knew things could turn bad quickly. He was just getting too much attention. Still, I think only Jesus realized that cool morning was one of his last few on earth. To us, it was just another Monday. But now we know, it was D minus 4, and counting.

3: Master, it’s getting warmer. Shall we take a break?

4: Yes. I think we’re all hungry.

2: Master, where are you going?

1: I think he’s spotted a fig tree.

5: He doesn’t look too happy.

9 minutes

3: Looks like there’s nothing on it.

1: What’d he say? Did you hear that?

2: Something about never bearing fruit again.

5: And it won’t either. Look at the thing. It’s fading fast.

3: Master, how did you do that?

Narrator: How did you do that? Is that all they can ask? What about why? Now there’s the bigger question. Why would Jesus curse a tree with no fruit? Had they asked that they might have had a glimpse into what Jesus was thinking — things dying. Hopes ending. A people who won’t bear fruit. To the disciples it was just Monday. But Jesus knew. It was D minus 4. In his mind, it was over. The Jewish authorities had made up their minds. Now he had nothing to lose. So when they finally made it to the temple that day, things got a little chaotic.

1: Whew! That's a climb. I'm ready for a break.

3: Yeah, let's sit down over here.

2: Uh ... I don't think Jesus is sitting down.

10 minutes

5: Nope, I've seen this before.

2: Yep, it's that look he gets in his eyes. See that guy with the doves? He doesn't know it yet, but he's in trouble.

1: Yeah, look at the guy with the scales. He's packing up already!

3: This'll be good.

Narrator: And so, in characteristic form, Jesus repeated what he did 3 years earlier. Not only clearing out the money changers from the temple, but inviting anyone who wanted to come near and pray — with no cover charge. Well needless to say, the authorities didn't appreciate this little gesture at all. In fact, they were more than mildly irritated. But what could they do? As badly as they wanted to arrest him, he was always surrounded by admiring crowds. Most people really liked his teaching. If they liked it on Monday, they came back on Tuesday. That's where he really shone.

◀ **Blocking:** Actors freeze as narrator begins this line from "Bethany."

11 minutes

Tuesday

 **Technical note:** Lights dim briefly.

Narrator: I didn't make it there on Tuesday. Oh I would have if I'd known it was really my last chance to hear him teach. But we had no idea. It was just another Tuesday to us. Tuesday before Friday. If you know what I mean ... But a guy has to make a living too. Couldn't be running off to Jerusalem every day. Takes better than two hours just to walk over and back. But boy did I hear the stories from my neighbors who went. Guess he put on quite a show.

◀ **Blocking:** Tuesday starts with the narrator on the second step of the ladder looking down the "Bethany" side. Actors 1 and 3 are frozen in a storytelling pose with actors 2, 4, and 5 as their small audience. As soon as narrator's introduction finishes, they snap to life in rapid-fire tag team style.

1: And then this guy comes up and says, "Hey, who gave you the authority to throw these merchants out? Do you have a permit? Section 3 paragraph 7 says that—"

Blocking: During this scene, actors 1 and 3 need to circle around with great animation, holding the others spellbound. Toward the end, they wind down a little and deliver their last lines as they sit.

- 3: And then Jesus turns to him and says “I’ll tell you what. You tell me what authority John had, and then I’ll tell you my authority.”
- 1: So this really stumped them. ‘Cause they realized if they said John was good, then he’d ask why they didn’t believe him.
- 3: But if they said he was bad, then they knew the crowd would riot, for we all know that John was a prophet.

12 minutes

- 1: Then Jesus said, “John came to you in righteousness, but not only did you dismiss him, you had no remorse about it. No remorse at his loss.”
- 3: And then he told that story about the vineyard. The owner was gone on a journey. And he sent his servants back to check on the fields. But the evil tenant farmers killed his servants so that the owner had to send his son.
- 1: Yes, but they killed the son too. They killed his own son.
- 3: So the Sadducees came next. And they thought they could disprove the idea of resurrection from the dead.
- 1: So they made up this ridiculous hypothetical situation about a guy who dies, and according to the our law, his brother, as next of kin, marries her.
- 3: Oh yes, but then he dies too and the third brother marries her until all seven of these brothers marry this woman before they die.
- 1: Then, they asked, whose wife shall she be when they all are raised from the dead? They were hoping to make resurrection look ridiculous.

13 minutes

- 3: But Jesus argued quite forcefully for the resurrection and proved it from their own scripture. “God is not the God of the dead, but the living,” he said.
- 1: They grilled him with questions about paying taxes and the law—

- 3: But somehow Jesus always turned the tables on them. They start out the “grillers” and end up the “grillees.” Eventually they gave up.

Narrator: And so after an exhausting day of confrontation and teaching, Tuesday winds down. He would finish with a fairly viscous counter-attack on the self-righteous. “Blind guides and hypocrites,” he called them. What galled him the most was their claim that although their ancestors had killed God’s prophets sent to them ... that if they had been alive at the time, they would not have made the same mistake. “Oh, no” he says. “You’ll prove you’re just like them because you’ll kill the prophets among you. Kill and crucify them.”

14 minutes

Now, call me pessimistic, but I noticed a theme on this Tuesday. John’s death. The vineyard owner whose own son is killed. The martyrdom of the prophets. The truth of the resurrection. We didn’t understand it then. But he knew. He knew what was up. It was Tuesday, but Friday was coming.

That night as they left the city, a strange thing happened. I heard from one of the twelve who hiked with him as they began that familiar path back from Jerusalem. At a certain point they stopped—

- 2: Master, look at the temple. Isn’t it beautiful?
- 3: Yes, and it sleeps tonight with no commerce in its courts.
- 5: That was a good one Lord.
- 4: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her. How often I would have gathered you to me as a hen gathers her chicks under

15 minutes

her wings. But you would not have it. So now your house will be left desolate. And not one stone here will be left upon another.

Narrator: And so they returned to Bethany. And the sun finally set on long, long Tuesday. And Friday’s still comin’.

Natural Music Break

◀ **Blocking:** Actors freeze as the narrator takes over. As soon as he gets into the introduction, they move back over to the “Bethany” side and assemble, frozen, in their next scene. As the narrator wanders over behind them to observe, they snap to life.

◀ **Blocking:** Make sure they’re all focused on the same point as they imagine the temple in the distance.





Technical note: Lights dim briefly.

Blocking: Mary's not actually in this scene, but the actors simulate her presence by all staring at the same point as they speak. Make that point toward the audience so they can see all the facial expressions.

Blocking: When Jesus says the word "burial," everyone freezes and the narrator takes over.



Technical note: Lights dim briefly.

Blocking: Narrator moves back to the ladder overlooking the courtyard.

Wednesday

► **Narrator:** Things happen quickly now. Wednesday dawned and found Jesus and the 12 again in Bethany. They were invited just down the street, there, to Simon the Leper's house. I guess we should call it Simon the ex-Leper's house. See Jesus healed him a while back. Otherwise Simon wouldn't have been allowed to be in his own house. Simon never got over that. I guess that's why he invited us all down. But even Simon didn't expect what Mary would do.

3: What's going on here?

2: I don't know. Looks like a terrible waste.

5: Do you know how much that perfume cost? I'd say a year's wages at least.

16 minutes

2: All spent in 5 minutes. Besides all that, she's making quite a fool of herself causing a scene like this.

3: Yes, think of what that money could have done. Take the poor for instance —

4: Leave her alone. Is she the only one who can sense what's happening? You will have your time to help the poor. But you won't have me. Can't you see? She did this for my burial.

Narrator: Burial? His burial? Excuse me, did he say burial? Everyone stopped. Granted, it shouldn't have been a total surprise. We knew things were tense. He'd even told the 12 he was going to die. But none of them wanted to believe it. We all thought there must be some way out. But here he was publicly predicting his death. And an uneasy mood swept over the room. You see he knew it was down to hours by now. But we didn't. To us it was just Wednesday. But to Jesus it was Wednesday ... before Friday.

17 minutes

Thursday

Jesus left the house shortly thereafter. I don't know where he went. Bethany was busy that day. It was right before the Passover. Most people were packing

up for the festival in Jerusalem. I had work to do myself. So I didn't see anything down there till Thursday morning. They were eating breakfast in the courtyard. It seemed kind of awkward. There was the hustle and bustle of everyone walking by the house, on the way to the city. In a way it seemed so normal — unbecoming his last normal day on earth. But as I remember now, Jesus seemed unmoved by all the activity. I guess he lived his last day like he lived all the rest. With a sort of quiet determination. Finally one of the disciples, I believe it was the one they called Simon Peter, said what everyone was thinking.

1: Master, where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover? We are going, aren't we?

18 minutes

4: Go into the city. As soon as you enter you'll see a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him till he enters a house. Then ask him where he would like us to eat the Passover. He'll show you where to go.

Narrator: So they left. And so did I. Little did I know that was the last time I'd see Jesus alive. That was Thursday morning. Thursday, before Friday. And you all know what happened that evening. The Last Supper. And of course you've all been able to read what happened late Thursday night. The garden. The arrest. I heard all about it later.

Friday

The next thing I saw was in the morning. Friday morning. With the Passover complete I was on my way back home to Bethany. I saw a crowd of people gathered around 3 crosses. Now normally I avoid

19 minutes

crosses. Stay as far away as I can. I've seen too many. But I couldn't help recognizing some of the bystanders. They were my friends and neighbors. What would compel them to visit a crucifixion? Nothing I could think of. Unless perhaps... No, it couldn't be ... not that fast ... why I just saw him yesterday ... in the courtyard below my window. Eating breakfast. He was just there yesterday ... How could ...? It was Friday. Good Friday. Dark Friday. D-Day.

◀ **Blocking:** All the actors exit here and leave the narrator all alone. He starts his line on the Jerusalem side and soon finds a focal point in the audience to represent the cross. He finishes by gazing at that point.

 **Technical note:** Lights dim briefly.

◀ **Blocking:** Narrator starts on the Jerusalem side. As he speaks, actors assemble behind him in their frozen pose of shock. They're seated, and focused on Jesus standing among them. They snap to life on cue.



He knew it all week. He knew it his whole life. And finally ... so did we.

Natural Music Break

Natural Break Point for Dividing into Two Parts (or 3rd of 3 Parts)

Narrator: The seven last days of Christ. We've seen them all. He packed a lot into that week. And of course you all have this great benefit of knowing how it all ends. We had no such benefit. We didn't know on Monday

20 minutes

that he'd be dead on Friday. And we didn't know Friday that —well, let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Saturday and Sunday

Narrator: The disciples were heartbroken on Saturday. No, that's not it. It wasn't heartbroken. It was more like angry, and gutted, and terrified all at the same time. They were in no condition to be believing anything. Sunday had them more confused. Rumors about the women at the tomb, angels, missing body- all very confusing. And who do you believe anymore? Which is why Sunday evening, Easter, is so funny in a way. They weren't ready for him to die. And just when they get used to the idea, he has the gall to slap them back to life with —

1,2,3,5: (Various noises of shock and fear)

Narrator: A fish dinner.

1: What is it!?

2: Nobody move.

3: Who —


4: Peace be with you.


5: Yabut —


21 minutes

4: Why are you so troubled?

2: It's a ghost.

 **Technical note:** Lights dim briefly.

 *Author's note:* Make sure their reaction is true panic. They're in shock while Jesus is very relaxed and cool.

 *Author's note:* The actors should be huddled together in shock and totally spooked. Slow the pace down here and they try to figure out what to do.

4: Nonsense. It's not a ghost. It's a me. Is there any thing to eat?

5: Eat?

4: Yes, I'm famished.

3: It says it's famished.

2: Give it a piece of fish.

1: You do it.

4: Yes, give it a piece of fish. See what it does. Mmm, not bad. A bit overcooked, Thaddeaus, but not bad.

Narrator: They were incredulous. One surprise after another. In the end it was undeniable. Even Thomas the skeptic signed on.

3: My Lord and my God.

Narrator: They had the door locked that night. Double locked. No surprises, no sir. Just huddle up here and lock the doors, and stay put. Keep everything out. Keep everything away ... Except they couldn't keep the risen Lord out ... Despite the locks, Jesus showed up whenever he wanted. For days he would show up in

22 minutes

the strangest places. Sometime to large groups. And then he'd be gone. The third time was my favorite. It wasn't here in Jerusalem. It was up in Galilee. Back where everything had started.

2: Anything?

3: Nothing. We've been out here all night.

1: I'm famished. What's that smell?


5: Well there must be some fish around here because that guy is cooking some?

3: What guy?

5: That guy. You can barely see him.

1: But you can smell that fish.

◀ **Blocking:** As the narrator speaks, the actors assemble on one side of the stage in an imaginary boat, frozen until their cue. Jesus is on the other side. But both sides call out toward the audience, not toward each other.

◀  *Author's note: You have to adjust the volume here depending on whether each person is speaking to a disciple or to Jesus. Cup hands and shout appropriately.*

- 4: Friends, do you have any fish?
- 2: What'd he say?
- 3: He wants to know if we have any fish. Not very nice to rub it in.
- 1: Tell him no. Maybe he'll have pity on us.
- 3: No! Been out here all night. You have any luck?
- 4: Yes. I found when I put my net on the other side of the boat, things turned my way.
- 2: What'd he say?
- 3: He says to put the net on the other side.
- 1: The other side? That's funny ... that's what Jesus-

23 minutes

Blocking: As 3 and 5 struggle to pull in imaginary nets, 1 stands gazing toward the audience to find Jesus. Upon his last line, they all freeze until the narrator finishes the conclusion.

- 5: Can't hurt anything.
- 3: Hang on, we got a haul!
- 5: Quick! Give me some help!
- 1: It's the Lord!

Narrator: And it was. And they had breakfast. Fish again. I think he liked fish. And that's where our story winds down. I can't tell you everything. But I've told you enough. If we were to write down everything Jesus did, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

We started with the seven last days of Christ. His last week. But the truth is, those weren't his last days. He has more to come. And much more than seven. For we have a risen Lord. His days are without number. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. The finality of the final week was reversed. The last enemy conquered. And he still offers eternal life to everyone who believes on his name.

Date _____
 Performed: _____
 Actors Used: _____



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