

LONG STORY SHORT

EPIISODE II WILDFIRE

A LENT JOURNEY
THROUGH THE SWEEPING
STORY OF SALVATION



#LONGSTORYSHORT

INTRODUCTION

Jesus has caused a real stir in Israel. He speaks with authority, with miracles and healings. As the rumour begins to circulate that, perhaps, he is God's long awaited Messiah, it is all over before it began. He is arrested and executed, his followers scattered.

What if this is it? The end of the story?

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SUNDAY

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, 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."

Then they remembered that he had said this. So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

Luke 24:1-12

That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

John 20:19-21



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Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing."

"We'll come, too," they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't see who he was. He called out, "Friends, have you caught any fish?"

"No," they replied.

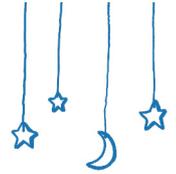
Then he said, "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get some!" So they did, and they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was

the Lord, he put on his tunic, jumped into the water, and headed to shore. The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about ninety metres from shore. When they got there, they saw that a charcoal fire was burning and fish were frying over it, and there was bread.

“Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said.

John 21:1-9,12



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During the forty days after his crucifixion, Jesus 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.

When the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 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.”

It was not long after he said this that he was taken up into the sky while they were watching, and he disappeared into a cloud. As they strained to see him, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven. And someday, just as you saw him go, he will return!”

The apostles were at the Mount of Olives when this happened, so they walked the kilometre back to Jerusalem. Then they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying.

Acts 1:3,6-11,12-13

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THE SPIRIT

They all met together continually for prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.

Acts 1:14

On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Jesus’ resurrection, the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

Godly Jews from many nations were living in Jerusalem at that time. When they heard this sound, they came running to see what it was all about, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

They were beside themselves with wonder. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born! ... We all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked

each other. But others in the crowd were mocking. “They’re drunk, that’s all!” they said.

Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. Some of you are saying these people are drunk. It isn’t true! It’s much too early for that. People don’t get drunk by nine o’clock in the morning. No, what you see this morning was predicted centuries ago by the prophet Joel:

In the last days, God said,

“I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit upon all my servants, men and women alike, and they will prophesy.”

Acts 2:1-8,11-18

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“People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus of Nazareth by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. But you followed God’s prearranged plan. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to the cross and murdered him. However, God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life again, for death could not keep him in its grip.

“Now he sits on the throne of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today.”

“So let it be clearly known by everyone in Israel that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified to be both Lord and Messiah!”

Peter’s words convicted them deeply, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

Peter replied, “Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles – all who have been called by the Lord our God.” Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this generation that has gone astray!”

Acts 2:22-24,33,36-40

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BUILDING A MOVEMENT

Those who believed what Peter said were baptised and added to the church – about three thousand in all. They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord’s Supper and in prayer.

A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had. They sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity – all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

Acts 2:41-47

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Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o’clock prayer service. As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the

people going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.

Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting a gift. But Peter said, "I don't have any money for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!"

Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and anklebones were healed and strengthened. He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God. When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded! They all rushed out to Solomon's Colonnade, where he was holding tightly to Peter and John. Everyone stood there in awe of the wonderful thing that had happened.

Acts 3:1-11

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Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. "People of Israel," he said, "what is so astounding about this? And why look at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power and godliness? For it is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of all our ancestors who has brought glory to his servant Jesus by doing this. This is the same Jesus whom you handed over and rejected before Pilate, despite Pilate's decision to release him. You rejected this holy, righteous one and instead demanded the release of a murderer. You killed the author of life, but God raised him to life. And we are witnesses of this fact!"

Many of the people who heard their message believed it, so that the number of believers totalled about five thousand men, not counting women and children.

Acts 3:12-15;4:4

Blessed with the Holy Spirit, filled with his power, it was as if Jesus had never left. The lame are still restored, the blind are still healed, the Good News is still preached to the poor.

And we are here, filled with that same Spirit and called to be people of the Way of Jesus.



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