

**MONDAY**  
**23 MAY**  
**Acts 16:11-15**  
**Psalm 149:1-5**  
**John 15:26 – 16:4**

**TUESDAY**  
**24 MAY**  
**Acts 16:22-34**  
**Psalm 138**  
**John 16:5-11**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**25 MAY**  
**Acts 17:15. 22 – 18:1**  
**Psalm 148:1-2. 11-end**  
**John 16:12-15**

**THURSDAY**  
**26 MAY**  
**Ascension Day**  
**Acts 1:1-11**  
**or Daniel 7:9-14**  
**Psalm 47 or 93**  
**Ephesians 1:15-end**  
**or Acts 1:1-11**  
**Luke 24:44-end**

**FRIDAY**  
**27 MAY**  
**Acts 18:9-18**  
**Psalm 47:1-6**  
**John 16:20-23**

**SATURDAY**  
**28 MAY**  
**Acts 18:22-end**  
**Psalm 47:1-2. 7-end**  
**John 16:23-28**

## REFLECTION

**G**oodbyes are always painful. Our New Testament readings from John see Jesus preparing the disciples for his departure. He has already told them not to let their hearts be troubled (14:1). It was no wonder they were upset: they had given up everything to follow Jesus, spending three whole years living alongside him.



Yet Jesus tells his disciples it is better for them that he goes away (John 16:7). How could this be? Surely there could be nothing better than learning directly from Jesus as the disciples did? However, the Gospels show their time with Christ had not really transformed these men. They remained fearful, jealous and slow to understand. It was not until the Holy Spirit came upon them that they truly changed receiving the courage, wisdom and power to follow and serve Christ.

The Spirit could only come once Jesus had ascended to heaven. Our Ascension Day reading from Luke suggests the disciples finally grasped the positive outcome of the ascension, returning to Jerusalem not in tears over their loss but with great joy, anticipating the gift Christ promised they would soon receive: the Holy Spirit. How incredible that this transforming gift is still available to us today!

PRAYER

Risen Christ,  
 you have raised our human nature to the throne of heaven.  
 Help us to seek and serve you,  
 that we may join you at the Father's side,  
 where you reign with the Spirit in glory,  
 now and for ever.

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## SCIENCE AND RELIGION

### PART I – GOD THE CREATOR – CHRISTIANITY AND CREATION

**E**arly Christian theologians were preoccupied with the material aspect of creation. Had God created everything out of nothing (ex nihilo), or had matter already existed in some form? In the second century the debate was fuelled by the drive to establish “orthodox” doctrine. Gnosticism held that matter was evil, and therefore intrinsically opposed to God.

By contrast, most of the Church Fathers, such as Tertullian (c. 160-225), held that God had created everything from scratch. During the Reformation, Luther (1483-1546) and Calvin (1509-1564) advocated a literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis, and numerous attempts were made in the seventeenth century to reconcile new scientific knowledge with Noah's flood. The Archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher (1581-1656), decided that the world had been created on 23 October 4004 BC, a view widely accepted until geologists found fossil evidence that the earth was far older.

It wasn't until Charles Darwin (1809-1882) published *On the Origin of Species*, that a heavyweight contender entered the arena to challenge traditional notions. Darwin's observations were shocking, because they suggested that animals and people share a common ancestry. By inference he was – like Copernicus and Galileo – challenging humankind's privileged position at the centre of creation.

And the debate has raged ever since, with some people holding very specific and passionate views, particularly in the US. In the 1925 Scopes “monkey” trial, a teacher was convicted of unlawfully teaching the theory of evolution. Prosecutor William Jennings Bryan maintained that ideas promoting evolution were “morally pernicious”. Opened in 2007, the Creation Museum in Kentucky presents creation as having taken, literally, six days – the view held by “young earth” creationists. “Old earth” creationists, on the other hand, tend to think that God did indeed create everything, but see the timescale as more flexible, while exponents of “intelligent design” accept scientific evidence, but believe that everything has been directed by God. But it's probably true to say that most Christians accept creation as one of God's mysteries – something that we cannot understand in our lifetime.

# LIVE theWORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by  
 Caroline Hodgson  
 and  
 Heather Smith



Sixth week of Easter

Monday 23 May to  
 Saturday 28 May  
 2022

WEEK