

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS AT GLENKIRK



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NOVEMBER 5 - 9, 2018

MONDAY

Psalm 22; Matthew 27:39-46; John 19:23-24

This week we consider Old Testament pictures and prophecy of Jesus Christ. Many Christians mistakenly spend little time in the Bible's first 39 books, under-appreciating their relationship with the Gospel and New Testament. Let's start with a Scripture particularly meaningful to me: Psalm 22, the "Messianic psalm."

In 1995, after accepting Christ at Glenkirk, I recognized my need to join a Bible study for the first time. At the end of my first study, the leader asked, "Any other questions?" I asked, "Why would Jesus, God the Son, who came to save fallen humankind, ask, 'My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?' from the cross?" The leader knowingly replied, "Let's turn to Psalm 22," thereby igniting my enduring passion for Bible study.

Psalm 22 conveys remarkable details of Christ's execution, though penned by King David about 1,000 years earlier—centuries before crucifixion's invention. So why Jesus' pre-death "My God, my God..." exclamation? The Jews knew Psalm 22 as Messianic; with this appeal Jesus essentially proclaimed, "I am the promised Messiah," likewise fulfilling prophecy. Christ also was expressing unfathomable relational anguish here, as the crucifixion was the only time in eternity that the Father and Son were separated when Jesus took the full punishment for our sins. Finally, our Lord experienced crucifixion's extreme physical pain as the "Son of Man."

Psalm 22:1-18 is the Savior's perspective surveying the crucifixion scene and His related feelings. He was mocked (vv. 6-8) by onlookers. "Bulls" (v. 12, powerful enemies) and "dogs" (v. 16, the bloodthirsty mob) surrounded Jesus. Soldiers gambled for His clothing (v. 18) and the anguishing effects of crucifixion was revealed: extreme dehydration, His heart breaking (vv. 14-15), stakes nailing Him to the cross (v. 16), and dislocated, hyper-extended bones (vv. 14, 17). Yet Jesus seeks the Father's comfort (vv. 19-21) and looks forward to believers' resultant salvation (vv. 22-31).

David Guzik recounts, "On the cross at that moment, a holy transaction took place ... *"God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). Psalm 22's last words, *"He has done it!"* Jesus' final quote from the cross: *"It is finished!"* (John 19:30).

QUESTION

Why is Psalm 22 known as Messianic? Why did Jesus make the "My God, my God ...?" appeal from the cross? What transaction between Father and Son took place on the cross?

PRAYER

Thank God for the ultimate sacrifice He made in offering Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. Ask Him for a more grateful, sensitive and joyful heart for what He has done and continues to do.

TUESDAY

Genesis 3:13-15; Revelation 12:9-17; Genesis 22:1-14

Did you know that the Bible's first prophecy pertains to Jesus and that Christ is pictured elsewhere in Genesis? Upon Adam and Eve's original sin in Eden, God declared that the respective "offspring" of the "woman" and the "serpent" would be ongoing adversaries (Genesis 3:15). The serpent is revealed in today's second reading, Revelation 12:9-17, as Satan and the woman is Israel, the human source of our Savior.

"This has been called the *protoevangelium*, the first gospel." (Guzik) Genesis 3:15 poetically prophesies that God the Son, born of a woman as Jesus of Nazareth, would enter Satan's domain so that the enemy could strike Him—which happened on Calvary's cross. However, the devil's apparent victory spelled his ultimate downfall, as Christ took humankind's rightful judgment and later rose to signify sin's and death's defeat.

The later Genesis 22 story of God telling Abraham to sacrifice Isaac is very strange at face value. God forbade child sacrifice, a wicked Canaanite practice (Leviticus 20:2). Moreover, Isaac was the long-awaited, promised son from whom God would produce His chosen people (Genesis 15). Was this only to test Abraham's faith? At this time Isaac was 15+ and Abraham 115+ years old; thus Isaac could have easily resisted—his compliance demonstrates the loving bond and faith of both father and son.

Moriah would later be called Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1), the story's mountain Golgotha or Calvary. Abraham was to offer his "only son" where

Jesus, the beloved Son (John 3:16) and the Lamb of God (John 1:29), would be crucified over 2000 years later. When Isaac inquired in Genesis 22:7, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" the King James Bible offers the best translation for Abraham's response: "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:8).

Of course God prevented Abraham from killing Isaac and furnished a male lamb (Genesis 22:13), making the imagery clear: God was illustrating His loving sacrifice at Calvary's cross. And counter to the cults' beliefs, God didn't sacrifice a created being but Himself in the form of Jesus of Nazareth as the ultimate act of love, righteousness and leadership.

QUESTION

What is the *protoevangelium*? Why did God command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? What is the significance of "Moriah's" location?

PRAYER

Ask God to let you know what you need to sacrifice, what "promised thing" that you cherish which may need to be given up in obedience. Trust Him to provide something even better, something that will deepen your relationship with Him.

WEDNESDAY

Exodus 12:3-13, 46; Matthew 26:26-28; John 19:31-36

As Jesus approached John while he baptized others, “the Baptist” exclaimed, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). This declaration must have sounded both familiar and strange to the Jews on hand. They knew well the Passover and its meal of a carefully prepared lamb, as it had been instituted and observed since the Egyptian exodus. But Jesus as the “Lamb of God”?

As God prepared His final plague on Egypt to spur Pharaoh’s release of Israel centuries earlier, He had Moses instruct them in preparing the first Passover. Hebrew households following His directions were spared. The Passover lamb was to be a flawless young male (Exodus 12:5), its flesh roasted and consumed fully during the meal (Exodus 12:8-10), none of its bones broken throughout (Exodus 12:46). The Jews were to apply some of the Passover lamb’s blood around their front doors to signal their obedience.

The young Man, Jesus of Nazareth, was sinless (1 Peter 2:22), therefore “without blemish”—this was confirmed even by various adversaries’ “inspections” throughout the week before the first Easter. The Pharisees’ bribed witnesses couldn’t substantiate His accusers’ claims (Mark 14:56). Both Pontius Pilate and Herod found the charges baseless (Luke 23:14-15). Even Jesus’ betrayer, Judas, confessed, “I have betrayed innocent blood” (Matthew 27:4).

At the crucifixion, the officials were anxious to speed up the deaths of Jesus and the two criminals to avoid the great offense of any hanging at sundown as the Jewish Passover Sabbath began. Breaking their legs would achieve this, preventing those crucified from supporting themselves. But Jesus had already died when they got to Him, eliminating the need to break His legs (John 19:33), fulfilling the Passover Lamb imagery and prophecy: “He guards all of His bones; not one of them is broken” (Psalm 34:20). The roasting, full consumption, and blood of the Passover lamb illustrate the gravity of Christ’s sacrifice.

John the Baptist announced the Messiah’s coming in calling Him “the Lamb of God.” Ironically, the Jews had been celebrating this symbolically for hundreds of years via the Passover’s rituals. Sadly, many continue to celebrate the Passover while remaining blind regarding the Savior.

QUESTION

Why did John the Baptist call Jesus “the Lamb of God”? What aspects of the Jewish Passover link directly to Jesus and His first coming mission? Why didn’t the Roman soldiers break Jesus’ bones as He hung on the cross and what’s the related significance of this?

PRAYER

Pray for those you know, whether Jewish or not, who don’t know the “Lamb of God” and His story. Ask God to equip and send you to those needing to hear the Gospel and for an increased measure of faithfulness and discernment to follow through.

THURSDAY

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; 1 Peter 2:21-25

Isaiah's stunning prophecies regarding the Messiah came centuries before Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. The *Agnus Dei* ["Lamb of God"] special services of past Glenkirk Christmases drew a good bit of its content and beauty from today's Isaiah passages, which rival Psalm 22 in their Messianic clarity and weightiness.

When we traveled to Israel in 2011 with other Glenkirkers, I had the opportunity to speak privately with our Israeli bus driver, a very bright and engaging fellow. I have found it amazing how my Jewish friend is so incapable of seeing Christ in Old Testament Messianic Scripture, so I thought I'd get his opinion on today's Isaiah passages. Regarding Isaiah 9, he offered, "It's clearly about the Messiah, whom we believe has yet to come." So I was able to agree with half of his interpretation. Regarding the Isaiah 52-53 passage, his interpretation was, "This is about the nation Israel." His perspective reminded me of prior conversations with Jewish friends.

For me, and likely for you, these Isaiah passages read clearly about Jesus. The Isaiah 52-53 passage offers stunning details about His first coming. The Isaiah 9 Scripture is about the Kingdom of God that Christ ushered in nearly 2000 years ago, that Kingdom presently in our midst and to be fully realized and manifested upon His future return.

You will never hear me encourage anyone to be less familiar with the Bible. However, with familiarity can sometimes come challenges in relating to those who can't, or won't, consider Scripture with "eyes that see and ears that hear." How easily and often I forget that this is exactly where I was for 39 years, which is most of my life.

I need to more fully embrace God's grace, and I need Him, continually, to help me be more patient and understanding toward others regardless of their relationship with Christ. I need reminding that, though biblical understanding is very good, we're not saved by our knowledge. We're saved by our relationship with Jesus, by repentant surrender to our Lord and Savior—"by His stripes we are healed" (Is. 54:5). Pray for Israel, our communities, our country and all who "walk in darkness" (Isaiah 9:2).

QUESTION

Why do most Jews interpret much of the Old Testament differently than Christians? What is Isaiah 52-53 describing? What is one potential pitfall of "over-familiarity" with the Bible?

PRAYER

Pray for the wisdom, humility and patience to engage nonbelievers more effectively. If you have "too few" non-Christian friends, ask God to bring more into your life and to grant you the obedience and heart to befriend them lovingly.

FRIDAY

Daniel 7:13-14; Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7

When you ask many about the book of Daniel, they'll reference Daniel in the lion's den and possibly the faithfulness of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace. The more studious may comment upon prophecy about the coming succession of then-future, dominant world empires. But it's likely that few would mention the Messianic prophecy from today's first reading.

Jesus' favorite name for Himself was the "Son of Man," which shows up in today's Daniel passage. This title, also used in other prophetic books, reinforces His first coming mission to step into humankind's plight so that, as a Man (while also fully God), He alone could redeem what a man (Adam) had lost. Daniel 7:13-14 gloriously illustrates Christ stepping into His rightful place in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Yesterday's devo addressed Israel's general blindness to her Messiah, ending with a prayer request for the Jews among others. Today's Zechariah and Revelation verses prophetically answer that prayer, at least for the "faithful remnant" (Romans 9:27). Some maintain that their referenced mourning and wailing are among the lost who realize, upon His return, the consequences of rejecting the Savior. I hold a more hopeful view: I believe that many Jews will turn to Christ upon His return, and their mourning and wailing will acknowledge Israel's role in crucifying Jesus and also be done for the subsequent generations of Jews who haven't known the Lord.

Matthew 24:30 states synchronously: *"Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."* I believe the "tribes" refer to Israel and the Jews' mass turning to Christ at the "end of times."

None of us knows when Jesus will return (Matthew 24:36). And there's at least one thing we can do while on earth that we won't be able to do in heaven: be used of the Spirit to witness and lead others to Christ. Today is the day of salvation! (2 Corinthians 6:2) With whom are you sharing the Gospel?

QUESTION

Why did Jesus self-identify as "the Son of Man" and what's the meaning of this expression? When will Jesus Christ return? What's one thing we can do in this life on earth that we'll be unable to do in eternity?

PRAYER

Pray that God would "open the eyes" and hearts of the Jewish people, of our community and our country. Ask God to stir the spirit of revival, first in our own hearts and throughout Glenkirk Church, so that we might be "salt and light" for others who don't know Him.

Sources:

- David Guzik's quotes can be found at <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>

