

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JAN 30 - FEB 3, 2023

Book of Luke • Jesus' Invitation to Hospitality

WELCOME TO THE TABLE

Epiphany Series
January 8 - February 19

MONDAY

Read **Luke 22:14-20; John 12:23-33; Matthew 21:33-42**

There are several common misconceptions regarding Jesus' first Advent mission. One is that He was merely an innocent victim. While He was innocent—innocence and purity essential to His fitness to atone for our sins—the Savior came for the specific purpose of sacrificing. Jesus reminded us that *“No one takes [My life] from Me, but I lay it down willingly”* (John 10:18). Jesus repeatedly predicted His impending crucifixion, declaring, *“For this purpose I have come to this hour”* (John 12:27).

Another view is that Jesus' sacrifice was simply God's reaction to earlier, failed attempts to establish a faithful following. Among other “proof texts,” those believing this cite the *“Parable of the Tenants”* (Matthew 21:33-46), wherein the “vineyard owner” (signifying God) sent “servants” (prophets) to check on the vineyard's progress. Upon these sent servants being brutalized by the vineyard's “tenants” (Israel), the owner sent his “son” (Christ), whom the tenants rejected and killed.

Some see Jesus' First Coming as “Plan B,” necessitated by Israel's unfaithfulness. A brother in my Bible study maintains that it was “Plan C”—Plan “A” being the Garden of Eden and “Plan B” being God's relationship with Israel. This interpretation is fueled by the notion that God is not all-knowing regarding the future.

“*When the hour came*” (Luke 22:14)—Jesus carefully managed events up to His final betrayal and crucifixion. As His ministry commenced, Jesus told Mary, “*My time has not yet come*” (John 2:4). At the Last Supper Jesus prayed, “*Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son [for Your own glory]*” (John 17:1)—omniscient, sovereign God is always in control, even when things appear chaotic. “*I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you*” (Luke 22:15)—Jesus was eager to share the Passover meal in order to transform it from a ritual Jewish observance to the Lord’s Supper, the ultimate “Passover” expression of forgiveness and reconciliation with God in Christ’s blood.

“[Jesus] arrived at the central reason why He came ... to institute a new covenant with [humankind], based on His own sacrifice. This was not the beginning of the end; it was the beginning of the beginning.” (David Guzik)

QUESTIONS

How was Jesus more than simply an “innocent victim”? Do you believe that God’s redemptive plan in Christ was merely His reactive “Plan B” (or “C”)? Why did Jesus tell His disciples that He “*earnestly desired to eat this Passover with [them]*” (Luke 22:15)?

PRAYERS

For Three Angels Haiti

Father God, please strengthen and encourage Three Angels local ministry personnel in Haiti—the teachers, nannies, medical and dental professionals, guest house managers, drivers and others. Overwhelm them with Your goodness, love and provision so that they might continue to advance Your kingdom purposes through Three Angels Haiti’s mission programs and activities.

TUESDAY

Read **Luke 22:19-20; Hebrews 10:1-18**

The Bible contains 66 books penned over roughly 4000 years by about 40 human authors, yet offers a consistent, integrated message: God's redemptive plan for humankind. As Jesus is the Redeemer, you would rightly expect much of the Bible to be about Him. Jesus reinterpreted the ancient Jewish Passover, revealing it and its lamb as pictures of His first Advent mission.

Jesus was called "*the Lamb of God*" in John 1:29 and throughout Revelation. Exodus 12:5 states: "*Your lamb shall be without blemish*"—Jesus of Nazareth was sinless. Priests inspected the sacrificial lambs throughout Passover's preparation week to ensure spotlessness. Jesus was "inspected" (by scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees, Herod, and Pilate) and found blameless throughout Passion Week. The Sanhedrin's bribed false witnesses—deployed during Jesus' illegal trial—futilely aimed to provide convicting testimony. Pilate, upon reviewing the Sanhedrin's charges against Jesus, declared, "*I find no fault in this Man*" (Luke 23:14).

Exodus 12:6 indicates "*you shall keep [the Passover lamb] until the fourteenth day of the same month*"—Jesus was killed the very day of the final preparation for the Passover feast, as the lambs were being sacrificed in the temple.

Regarding the preparation of the Passover lamb, Exodus 12:46 states, "*nor shall you break any of its bones.*" Psalm 34:20 prophesied: "*He*

guards all of His bones; not one of them is broken.” At the crucifixion, Jewish officials aimed to accelerate the deaths of Jesus and two criminals being executed, so that none would be hanging at sundown as the Sabbath and Passover commenced. *“The soldiers came and broke the legs of the [two others on crosses]. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs”* (John 19:31-33).

In the original Passover, Jews following God’s instructions regarding the lamb were spared. However, the Passover lamb’s execution could merely cover the people’s sins. The “Lamb of God” sacrificed to justify His true followers, rendering us “not guilty” in Christ—reconciling us with God, regenerating us and procuring our eternal adoption. Jesus thereby ended the need for animal sacrifices, which were foreshadows of His atoning work. Worthy is the Lamb!

QUESTIONS

Why was Jesus called “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29)? Which of the ways in which the Jewish Passover lamb pictured Jesus’ first coming mission do you find most interesting? How do the effects of the sacrifice of the Jewish Passover lamb differ from the outcome of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice?

PRAYERS

For Three Angels Haiti

Almighty Lord, thank You for the precious Haitian children whom You entrust to Three Angels’ care. Help our students grow strong in their school subjects and life skills, but, most importantly, in knowledge and faithfulness to the Savior, Jesus Christ. Please keep them safe amidst all of Haiti’s trials and unrest.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Luke 22:19-27; Mark 9:33-37; John 13:1-5**

We are in Week 5 of Glenkirk's 7-Week Epiphany series, "Spirit-Led Hospitality." On the eve of His execution, our Lord hosted the Last Supper wherein He instituted the sacrament of Communion. Knowing that His brutal scourging and crucifixion would commence within hours, can you imagine Jesus' grace and hospitality in attending to His followers on the cusp of unfathomable humiliation and pain?

Moreover, can you understand the motives and mindsets of Jesus' disciples, those who walked with Him continually for 3+ years? As Christ lovingly dined with and ministered to His followers in the upper room, Luke 19:24 indicates, "*A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.*" This was not the first instance of such selfishness. Mark 9:33-34 indicates the same, earlier argument among the twelve disciples in Capernaum. As Jesus contemplated Calvary's horror, His disciples egotistically jockeyed in a game of one-upmanship. Many scholars believe that Jesus washed their feet in the aftermath of this, providing them with a much-needed object lesson in meekness and servitude.

Included in this group were Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Savior to enemies, and Simon Peter, who would deny the Savior repeatedly amidst Jesus' illegal Sanhedrin "trial" hours later. Yet Jesus lovingly washed the feet of two as unworthy as these.

Not only did Jesus wash Judas' feet, but He called him "*friend*" (Matthew 26:50)—Judas may have inspired the popular saying, "With 'friends' like this, who needs enemies?" Jesus seated Judas at a place of honor during the Passover/Communion meal (Mark 14:20) and warned His betrayer to reconsider his treachery (John 13:10-11, Luke 22:22). The loving, living God is a merciful Provider of second, third, fourth and innumerable chances—no one who is judged can ever rightly protest, "Unfair!"

It's tempting to take shots at Judas—and even his fellow disciples. Arguing repeatedly over their stature while being taught and cared for by God's Son! Denying and even betraying the "*Lamb of God*" just before His gory sacrifice! Until I consider how much like them I can be. "*God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*" (Luke 18:13).

QUESTIONS

Why do you believe that Jesus' closest disciples argued over "*which of them was the greatest*"? How did Jesus treat Judas Iscariot like anything but an enemy? Why do you think God gives us so many chances?

PRAYERS

For Three Angels Haiti

Our God of mercy and healing, we ask You to pave the way for the abandoned children cared for in Three Angels "Angel House" orphanage. For those whose adoptions are in process, please smooth the way for their "forever families" to receive them soon—bless these people who open their homes to these children.

THURSDAY

Read **Luke 22:17-20; John 6:53-58**

The sacrament of Communion is this week's "Spirit-Led Hospitality" thematic centerpiece. Today we examine what is meant by "Communion" and how it is viewed within our ECO denomination.

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines *Communion* with a horizontal, communal emphasis: "The state of sharing or exchanging thoughts and feelings; the feeling of being part of something." In evangelical Christianity, however, Communion is synonymous with the Lord's Supper, wherein we "[remember] Jesus' sacrifice on the cross ... [and] bring ourselves before the Lord and partake in the life He has given us through His death and resurrection. ... The Lord's Supper is not only a reminder of [Jesus'] brutal death, but it is also a celebration of the incredibly generous grace of God and the invaluable privilege of being forgiven." (Bible Study Tools)

ECO's Constitution states that "in the Lord's Supper, we confess that as we eat the bread and share one cup, the Spirit unites us to the ascended Christ so that His resurrection life may nourish, strengthen, and transform us."

There are, however, common misperceptions among believers regarding Communion. One denomination sees the bread and wine "transubstantiating" (changing) into the literal bodily flesh and blood of the

Redeemer, the Lord essentially “descending” again to partakers. Other denominations harmonize with the *Oxford Dictionary*, treating the Lord’s Supper merely as a reflective, commemorative ritual helping bind Christian community. “There are a lot of Christians who think that the action of the Supper is only horizontal, involving the community’s act of memorializing the death of Jesus. ... [Other] Christians ... think that the action of the Supper involves the presence of Jesus being dispersed into the world. [However, ECO maintains that] the action of the Supper is vertical, but not because Jesus comes down. Rather, when we share the bread and the cup, we are all gathered up to be united with Jesus in heaven. He doesn’t move; we do.” (ECO)

Communion involves glorious mystery and has “horizontal” aspects, but it is more than that. The Lord’s Supper draws us vertically, up into the loving presence of the Savior, the only Way to forgiveness, reconciliation with God and abundant life.

QUESTIONS

What are some of the common misunderstandings or misapplications of Communion? How is the Lord’s Supper foundationally “vertical” in emphasis? What are some of Communion’s “horizontal” aspects?

PRAYERS

For Three Angels Haiti

Gracious Father and loving Lord, please bless and pave the way for the Three Angels “Angel House” abandoned children who do not yet have adoptive families. Comfort them, keep them healthy and growing, and please stir the hearts of potential adoptive “forever families” to welcome one of these children fashioned in Your image into a loving home.

FRIDAY

Read **1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Ephesians 3:7-12; Isaiah 55:8-9**

Consider this: The perfect, all-powerful, omniscient Creator desires intimate fellowship with you! In Christ, God hospitably invites us to His Communion table, into Jesus' heavenly presence while grounding us for godly fellowship and service. Almighty God chooses to work through feeble, broken vessels to carry His Gospel message and bring Christ to people.

Consider other “paradoxes” and glorious “mysteries” of Christianity:

- God is One while also triune; our holy (set-apart) God is relational, as is love itself.
- God is all-knowing and sovereign; yet He created humans with free will, enabling us to reject Him.
- God fashioned us from “dust;” concurrently, however, we are made in God’s image, His crowning creation.
- Though the Way to salvation is “narrow,” it is open to all regardless of history, abilities, ethnicity, social standing, etc.—we are fallen sinners and God hates sin, yet He is “*unwilling that any should perish.*” (2 Peter 3:9)
- Calvary’s cross—a symbol of death, where the most humiliating, painful, undeserved punishment occurred—is where abundant life begins, wherethrough God reversed the curse in Christ.
- Though the “*Prince of Peace,*” Jesus “brought a sword” disrupting families, friendships and regimes; the humble, meek, Self-sacrificing

“Lamb of God” is the rider on *“a white horse ... clothed in a robe dipped in blood ... He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God.”* (Revelation 19:11-15)

- Jesus is the Savior and Advocate; however, rejecting Jesus makes Him your Judge—to have victory, you must surrender (to the Victor).
- The “first” (the entitled, self-serving) shall be last and the “last” (God’s humble servants) shall be first; those who “lose their life” (selfishness and related entrapments) will gain abundant life (conformance into increasing Christlikeness)—one must “die to self” to live eternally.
- God disciplines His beloved children, allowing faith-strengthening trials and “evils.”
- We are to be *“in the world”* (God’s active light-bearers) while *“not of the world”* (captive to its temptations).

“Amazing love, how can it be? That You, my King, would die for me!”
(Billie James Foote)

QUESTIONS

Why does God invite us to His Communion table and work with us and through us to spread His Gospel? Which of the “paradoxes”/“mysteries” shared do you find most compelling? With which do you struggle most?

PRAYERS

For Three Angels Haiti

Our Creator and Strong Tower, we ask that Your peace rest upon Haiti, its citizens and leaders. Open hearts to Your will and ways, guiding decisions and lives for Your kingdom purposes. As well, Father, please stir the hearts of current and potential supporters at Glenkirk Church that they might bless Three Angels Haiti’s ministry both prayerfully and financially.

Sources

- Monday's devo draws from Jeff Stott's related commentary found at <https://truthappliedjs.com/the-lords-supper-luke-2214-20/#:~:text=Look%20with%20me%20at%20Luke%2022%3A14%2C%20When%20the,wine%20and%20gave%20thanks%20to%20God%20for%20it.>
- David Guzik's quote is from <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/luke-22/>.
- *Oxford Dictionary's* definition of "Communion" can be found at https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/communion#:~:text=%5Buncountable%5D%20communion%20%28with%20somebody%2Fsomething%29%20%28formal%29%20the%20state%20of,See%20communion%20in%20the%20Oxford%20Advanced%20Learner%27s%20Dictionary.
- Bible Study Tools' quote can be found at <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/what-is-communion-and-why-is-it-celebrated-differently.html>.
- ECO's quotes are from its Constitution (<https://eco-pres.org/wp-content/uploads/Official-ECO-CONSTITUTION-2022.pdf>) and website (<https://eco-pres.org/meeting-jesus-at-his-table/>).
- Billie James Foote's lyrics are from his worship song, "You Are My King (Amazing Love)," © Copyright 1999, www.worshiptogether.com. Songs (ASCAP) (admin. by EMI CMG Publishing).



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