

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

MARCH 27 - 31, 2023

Welcome to the

# Story

Lenten Series 2.26 - 4.2



# MONDAY

Read **Genesis 49:10-11; Job 19:25-27; Mark 11:1-10**

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Messianic anticipation was feverish in early 1st century AD Israel. Over seven centuries earlier the Northern Kingdom experienced Assyrian captivity, Israel's tribes generally losing their unique Jewish identities via assimilation (Jewish-Assyrian intermarriage produced the Samaritans) or dispersion into other lands. Babylon exiled Judah commencing in 605 BC, Babylon later yielding to Medo-Persia (539 BC), conquered thereafter by Greece's Alexander the Great (334 BC).

From 605 BC onward, Judah experienced only about 97 years of self-rule, ending with Rome's occupation in 63 BC. The Jews—hungry for autonomy—expected the promised, long-awaited Messiah to overthrow Rome and restore Israel's former glory.

Centuries earlier as Israel's dying patriarch Jacob blessed his sons, he prophesied "*The scepter shall not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh comes*" (Genesis 49:10, NKJV). In context, Shiloh means "the King Messiah." (theisraelbible.com) Jewish rabbis interpreted "the scepter" (of a king) departing as Israel losing its sovereignty, one aspect being the inability to execute its own "criminals." They believed the Christ would come subsequent to this, restoring Israel's independence and prominence. Scholars indicate that Rome revoked Israel's right to capital punishment in 6 AD (or perhaps as late as 28 AD)—Jesus was living in Israel as this right was cancelled. The Sanhedrin's interplay

with Pontius Pilate—pressuring Pilate and Rome to crucify the Lord—was due to Israel’s legal powerlessness to slay the Savior.

In this week leading to Palm Sunday, note Jacob’s prophetic utterance picturing Jesus’ “Triumphal Entry”: “*Binding ... His donkey’s colt to the choice vine*” (Genesis 49:11). Jesus, “*the true Vine*” (John 15:1) and Messiah, gloriously entered Jerusalem riding a donkey’s colt (Mark 11:7-10). Jacob’s words then anticipated Jesus’ first and second coming missions in its imagery: “*He has washed His garments in wine and His vesture in the blood of grapes*” (49:11). Jesus’ blood (symbolized by wine) paid for our sins; He will return as humankind’s righteous Judge with consequences for those rejecting Him.

As we embrace Palm Sunday, its context, fulfilled prophecy, and promised salvation in Christ, celebrate this: “*Your King [has come] ... humble and mounted on a donkey*” (Matthew 21:5). This is good news—share it!

## QUESTIONS

Why were the Israelites so eager for the Messiah’s coming in the 1st century A.D.? Why did the Sanhedrin have to manipulate Pontius Pilate into having Jesus executed vs. doing it themselves?

## PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

Pray that the impact Stephen and Kate were able to make with the reached Indonesian people will continue to grow and more people will come to faith.

# TUESDAY

Read **Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-30, 19:28-36**

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Scripture highlights Jesus' intentionality and restraint in revealing Himself (revisited in tomorrow's devo). However, the Savior openly declared His mission early while reading publicly in Nazareth's synagogue. Isaiah's prophecy, predating Christ by seven centuries, shared several elements of the Messiah's purpose: *"bring good news to the poor (in spirit) ... bind up the brokenhearted ... proclaim liberty to [sin's] captives ... [open] the prison to those who are bound (by empty religiosity) ... [and] comfort all who mourn (over their own and others' sin)"* (Isaiah 61:1-2).

Upon reading from Isaiah, Jesus clearly professed His Messiahship: *"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"* (Luke 14:21), riveting the onlookers' eyes upon Him. You might expect fellow citizens to respond positively, even pridefully—after all, Nazareth was the Messiah's hometown! Mary, likely having endured 30 years of scandalous rumors, perhaps felt joyful vindication at her Son's public declaration.

However, as Jesus taught further of God's favor extending to Gentiles, jealous and hostile Nazarenes aimed to cast Him from a nearby cliff. They violently rejected His mission transcending ethnic Israel and its interests—this foreshadowed Jesus' general rejection by the Jews and the Sanhedrin's later maneuvers to have Rome crucify Christ. They wanted an "Israel first and Israel only" Messiah.

Fast-forward to Jesus' Palm Sunday Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem: onlookers proclaimed "*Hosanna (Save now!)*" and praised Him with the messianic title, "*Son of David*" (Matthew 21:9). Within days, however, the Hebrew mob shouted, "*Crucify Him!*" (Luke 23:21). Were they conflicted and fickle? Merely confused?

When God declared, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*" (Jeremiah 17:9), He was not revealing an issue unique to ancient Israel. Although we benefit from Israel's example—including the consequences of its unfaithfulness—and the Bible shares Jesus' ministry and teachings, still we continue to sin "*and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 8:28). Sin in all of its forms—including marginalizing or hating "those unlike us"—breaks fellowship with God and adds to Jesus' burden at Calvary. All-too-regular news reports, sadly, reinforce malice and other sin as fallen humankind's common issue. "*Hosanna ... Son of David!*"

## QUESTIONS

After Jesus preached to fellow Nazarites as His ministry commenced, why did some want to cast Him off of a cliff? What's the significance of the Jews' declaration, "*Hosanna ... Son of David!*"? How are we, and the greater society, sometimes like the misguided among the Israelites?

## PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

Pray for the Clarks as they transition to new roles with C2C here in the United States.

# WEDNESDAY

Read [Zechariah 9:9-11](#); [Matthew 21:9-11](#); [Luke 19:37-40](#)

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Other than His Isaiah 61:1-2 reading and follow-up comments in Nazareth as His ministry commenced (per yesterday's devo), Jesus' Triumphal Entry was His first clear, public demonstration of being Israel's Messiah. Why did Jesus wait until then for such an unguarded display, while earlier admonishing recipients of healing or other miracles to "tell no one" (Matthew 8:4, etc.) or avoiding certain circumstances because "My hour (or time) has not yet come" (John 2:4, etc.)?

Past devos explored Jesus' initial unrecognizability by followers walking toward Emmaus and while His disciples fished in Galilee. Abundant Scripture verses reference God "*hiding His face*" (Isaiah 8:17, etc.). Jesus often taught publicly via parables with intent toward some that "*seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand*" (Matthew 13:13). On Palm Sunday, however, Jesus' seeming "evasiveness" transformed into an open celebration of His Messiahship. Why had He been so publicly "reserved" previously?

There are many plausible explanations, but consider several:

- Jesus was doing the Father's will—He wasn't "running for office" or seeking fleeting popularity.
- Jesus, per the Father, meticulously managed the time and events unfolding—premature notoriety could deter advancing His mission and fulfilling prophecy.

- Many, even His disciples, sometimes were unable to receive His message—they might misapply or garble Jesus’ message while He wanted them to be well-equipped light-bearers.
- Publicity about His miracles might divert attention away from Jesus’ message—people might then “follow” for wrong reasons (to be entertained, get fed, etc.).
- Making us “work a bit” to find Him strengthens and deepens our faith.
- As with teaching in parables, Jesus’ ambiguity regarding His identity was grace-filled: those recognizing while rejecting Him would be accountable for their choice.
- Sometimes His inquisitors’ agenda was selfish curiosity (e.g., Herod) or trying to entrap Jesus (the Pharisees).

Our take-away from this is not “be an undercover Christian (like Jesus).” Rather, truly like Him we are to be prayerful, Spirit-led, gracious servants who meet people where they are. His “*hour has ... come*”—with whom will you clearly, lovingly share Christ this week?

## QUESTIONS

Why was Jesus generally so guarded regarding His Messianic identity and mission prior to the Triumphal Entry? What was different at Palm Sunday when Jesus openly received praise as the Messiah?

## PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

Pray for safe travel for the Clarks in their new positions as they visit various locations around the States.

# THURSDAY

Read **Psalm 118:17-27; Psalm 110-1-3; Psalm 2:5-12**

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Can you picture God “singing”? Zephaniah 3:17 declares, “*The LORD your God ... will exult over you with loud singing.*” Jesus sang with His disciples following the Last Supper while walking toward Gethsemane (Mark 14:26). The word “psalm” means song; many biblical Psalms—like much of Scripture—prophesy regarding the Lord’s first and second coming missions. Today we feature three melodic Psalms rich in Messianic content.

Psalm 118:17-27 offers a sweeping overview of the first Advent imagery, including Jesus’ atoning, sacrificial death—to “post bail” for sinners who would believe on Him—and His glorious resurrection (vv. 17-18), indicating the completeness of His sacrifice. Regarding the sufficiency of what His crucifixion achieved, Jesus Himself declared from the cross, “*It is finished*” (John 19:30). Likewise, Psalm 22:31 prophesied, “*They shall come and proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn, that He has done it.*”

Psalm 118—prophetically penned by Israel’s King David circa 1000 B.C.—predicts Israel’s general rejection of the Messiah (v. 22), features Triumphal Entry language (v. 26), and reinforces the marvelous work of salvation that God produces in Christ, both as the saving Lamb of God and the returning King of His second coming (v. 27). Is there anything more glorious for us to sing about?



Psalms 2 and 110 likewise feature majestic Messianic content, including Jesus's deity—"You are My Son" (2:7)—and His faithful fulfillment of His mission and, perhaps, enduring countenance as a young Man—"the dew of Your youth will be Yours" (110:3). They also reinforce Christ's glory as the retuning King—"I will make the nations Your heritage" (2:8)—and the consequences of rejecting Him—"I make Your enemies Your footstool" (110:1), "You shall break them with a rod of iron" (2:9) and "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish" (2:12).

Do you spend time in the Psalms, as aids to both prayer and drawing closer to Jesus? When worshiping God in song, whether privately or communally, are you surrendered and uninhibited? "Shout to the Lord, all the earth let us sing! Power and majesty, praise to the King!" (Darlene Zschech) "Blessed are all who take refuge in Him" (Psalm 2:12).

## QUESTIONS

How do you feel about the image of God "singing"? How much time do you spend in the Psalms? Which are your favorites?

## PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

Pray for the grief and anxiety the Clarks are carrying and pray for their health after experiencing a recent loss.

# FRIDAY

Read [Luke 19:35-44](#); [Matthew 23:37-39](#); [Genesis 6:5-6](#)

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Luke indicates that as Jesus' procession approached Jerusalem following His Triumphal Entry, "He wept over it" (Luke 19:41). Matthew 23:37-39 shares Jesus' similar lament over Jerusalem, occurring days later. In Noah's time, humankind's intensifying wickedness made God regret "that He had made [humankind ... grieving] Him to His heart" (Genesis 6:6). Arriving four days after Lazarus' death, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35)—the Bible's shortest verse.

Our God is not stony and aloof, unlike the "gods" of several other religions. The living God cares deeply for us, so much that the Son joined humankind in our fallen plight on a mission of redemption. Our triune God includes the Persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Accordingly, He is relational, having personality and feelings. The Bible repeatedly conveys God's longing for His people to turn from sin's ravages and return to Him.

Isaiah called the Messiah "a Man of sorrows ... acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). Might we conclude from all of this that Jesus was "weepy" and fragile? On the contrary, He willingly endured the brutal Roman scourging along with crucifixion's horrific pain and humiliation. Moreover, Jesus refused the "anesthesia" offered Himself on the cross (Matthew 27:34), opting for the fullness of painful judgment for humankind's sins.

The common basis for Jesus' and God's grief: sin. God loves us deeply, thus hating the sin which destroys His beloved. He permits evil and sin, presently, to make room for our free will. Absent freedom to choose—even if such choices include rejecting Christ or other self-destructive sins—"love" would be loveless. "Love is costly. It always involves some kind of self-denial. It often demands suffering." (John Piper) Among the costs to God in creating and loving us is His felt pain when we sin.

Ponder the glorious heart of God: "*While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). "The Gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe ... [while] we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." (Timothy Keller) Ask Almighty God for a loving, sacrificing heart more like His.

## QUESTIONS

Why do you think "*Jesus wept*" (John 11:35) after arriving near Lazarus' home four days after his death? What is one way that today's devo emphasizes the difference between the living God and the false "gods" of other religions? If God hates sin, why does He allow it?

## PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries



Pray for endurance, hope, and perspective during this difficult season of transition and grief.

## Sources

- The theisraelbible.com's definition can be found at <https://theisraelbible.com/jacobs-deathbed-vision-of-shiloh-a-glimpse-of-messiah/#:~:text=Rashi%20explains%20that%20in%20this%20context%2C%20Shiloh%20means,for%20tribute%20in%20this%20verse%20is%20Shilo%20%28שילוי%29>.
- Darlene Zschech's lyrics are from her song, "Shout to the Lord" (published by Hillsong Music Australia, 1993).
- John Piper's quote can be found at [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/25423.John\\_Piper](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/25423.John_Piper)
- Timothy Keller's quote is from <https://quotefancy.com/quote/921412/Timothy-Keller-The-gospel-is-this-We-are-more-sinful-and-flawed-in-ourselves-than-we-ever#:~:text=%20The%20gospel%20is%20this%3A%20We%20are%20more,—%20Timothy%20Keller%20Featured%20in%3A%20Timothy%20Keller%20Quotes>.



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