



29th of March 2020

Passiontide..

Due to the current **coronavirus** situation and the CofE decree, with **St Martins** closed I have amended the pew sheet so you can use the prayers of Intercession for this week, in your home and also be able to read the bible passages. Don't forget moreover the Diocese has links lots of information on their website.

<https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/>

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You will be pleased to learn that the Revd. Jan is now back at work but confined to the Vicarage. She will however be contacting members of the Church here by phone on Wednesdays during this crisis.

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Items for the pew leaflet should reach Revd. Jan Hardy by 3pm on Wednesdays. *You can contact Revd. Jan by E. mail: rev.j.hardy@btinternet.com*

Telephone 01759 307490

OR

Gordon Fallowfield (BM Church Warden)
email: muddypastures@btinternet.com

Revd. Jan's day off is Friday each week.

**NOTE: PALM CROSSES
HAVE BEEN PLACED IN
A BUCKET INSIDE THE
CHURCH MAIN DOORS
PLEASE TAKE ONE.**



Please remember the following people in your prayers:
Catherine Pomfrett, Karen Longster, Ann Cockshott
and Shirley Cattle.

Prayers for your consideration: -

Almighty God, as we approach Holy Week hearing again, in its entirety, the story of Christ's passion, may it help us to truly understand the sacrifice he made for us as we reflect on some aspects of his passion.

Despite being unable to gather in our churches we give thanks for all those who are putting together and posting digital worship, enabling us to be together in spirit as we relive the Easter story, a story which fills us with hope and confidence that there will be an end to the chaos of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

We think of Christ the servant – in the words of St Ignatius.

Holy God teach us to be generous. Teach us to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that we do your will.

We think of Christ at prayer whilst his disciples sleep.

Gracious God we recognise that sometimes we put off prayer and thanksgiving as we give way to our human frailty. We thank you for those who pray and intercede on our behalf both in heaven and here on earth especially for our priests and chaplains and all members of religious orders who live a prayerful life of poverty, celibacy and obedience.

We think of Christ betrayed with a kiss and with denials

Almighty God, please help us never to abandon someone in their time of greatest need. Help us to forgive those who have wounded and abandoned us in times of crisis. Cleanse our hearts from bitterness and resentment so that we can be more like Jesus, who was abandoned and betrayed by those closest to him.

We think of Christ falsely tried

Merciful God, we pray today for those facing the mockery of a trial, knowing that there is no justice for them and that their sentence might lead to a long term of imprisonment or even death. We remember too those who languish in jails that are overcrowded or in inhumane conditions and those who await their fate on "death row"

We think of Christ tortured and violently executed

Everlasting God, your son was tortured, beaten and humiliated, and sentenced to an agonizing death though he had done no wrong. We pray for all prisoners throughout the world and ask you to be with them in the darkness of their prison cell, in the loneliness of separation from those they love and in their fear in the face of torture, execution and death.

We think of Christ's compassion despite the way he received none himself.

Loving God we pray for all who bring comfort, care and healing especially our Health Services who are bravely caring for those who are in need in this worldwide crisis. We pray for the sick, the sorrowful, those who have recently died and those who are bereaved by their passing.

Father God, as we move into Holy Week we commend ourselves and all those whom we live amongst, for whom Christ suffered, to His mercy and protection.

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

*For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Palm Sunday

Psalm 118 1-2, 19 to End

- ¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.
- ² Let Israel say:
“His love endures forever.”
- ¹⁹ Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
- ²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.
- ²¹ I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.
- ²² The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
- ²³ the LORD has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
- ²⁴ The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.
- ²⁵ LORD, save us!
LORD, grant us success!
- ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.
- ²⁷ The LORD is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up^{to} to the horns of the altar.
- ²⁸ You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.
- ²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Gospel Reading: Mathew 21 1-11

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet:-

“Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”
“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”
“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Good Friday - The passion

Old Testament Reading - Isaiah 50 – 4-9a

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Mathew 26: 14 – End 27

26 Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I betray him to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

The Passover with the Disciples

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

[The Institution of the Lord's Supper](#)

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the^l covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

[Peter's Denial Foretold](#)

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

[Jesus Prays in Gethsemane](#)

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

[The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus](#)

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

[Jesus before the High Priest](#)

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end.

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?"

[Peter's Denial of Jesus](#)

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed.

Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

[Jesus Brought before Pilate](#)

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

[The Suicide of Judas](#)

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.

He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave^l them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

Pilate Questions Jesus

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Barabbas or Jesus?

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus^[a] Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather

that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself.

He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land^[a] until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, Iema

sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

The Burial of Jesus

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. The Guard at the Tomb

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'

Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

The Coming of the King - Philip Ryken

Introduction

Jesus and his disciples were on the Jericho road. They had already climbed most of the treacherous pathway that twisted and turned for 17 miles from Jericho up to Jerusalem.

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.'

By this point in Jesus' ministry, most of the disciples had learned to do as they were told, so the two men "went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them" (However trivial this errand may have seemed, it was full of biblical and theological significance. It demonstrated that Christ had come to be the King. As Matthew explains, "This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 'Say to the Daughter of Zion, "See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey"' " ([Matthew 21:4-5](#)).

When Charles Jennens wrote the libretto for Handel's *Messiah*, he recognized the significance of this prophecy, and of its fulfillment. One of the unusual features of the oratorio is how little it says about the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. *Messiah* focuses on the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, with only the briefest mention of Jesus' earthly ministry. Thus the text passes quickly from Christmas to Good Friday. One moment the angels announce the Messiah's birth, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men." Soon the choir will sing, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." However, as the music critic Donald Burrows writes:

There is no treatment of Christ's teaching or pastoral ministry between his Incarnation and his Passion. Jennens pays almost no attention to what Jesus said or did, because *Messiah* is not about these things: the subject of the drama is God's redemption of mankind through the Messiah.

Of all the things that Jesus said and did between his birth and his passion, the one that Charles Jennens chose to include was the triumphal entry. He alluded to it by quoting from the prophet Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy king cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour and he shall speak peace unto the heathen." Jennens made a good choice: It was by getting on a donkey and riding into Jerusalem that Jesus announced that he was coming as Israel's messianic king.

The rightful king

The people of Israel had always understood Zechariah's prophecy to refer to the Messiah, to God's anointed king. The prophet said: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" ([Zechariah 9:9](#)).

When Jesus mounted the donkey—not just any donkey, but specifically a pure-bred colt, as Zechariah promised—he was presenting himself as Israel's promised king. By his actions, he was saying, "Behold, *thy* king cometh unto thee."

The Jews knew their Bibles, and many people in the crowd would have remembered the words of Zechariah and recognized what Jesus was doing. Some of them may have even remembered that when Solomon became Israel's king, he was presented on the donkey of his

father David ([1 Kings 1:38-39](#)). One clue that the people of Jerusalem recognized this connection is that, when they saw Jesus riding on the foal of a donkey, they said, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" ([Matthew 21:9](#)). In any case, by using that title, they were acclaiming Jesus to be their rightful king. They recognized that he had come "in the name of the Lord!" ([Matthew 21:9](#); cf. [Psalm 118:26](#)).

Although it is often overlooked, there is an even older prophecy that explains why Jesus rode a donkey. Long before Zechariah, Jacob pronounced this blessing on his son Judah: "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch" ([Gen. 49:10-11a](#)).

Jacob's prophecy meant that Israel's true king would come from the tribe of Judah, and that in some way he would be associated with the colt of a donkey. What is only hinted at in Genesis was made plain in the Gospel: Jesus, the Son of David, from the tribe of Judah, rode into Jerusalem as Israel's rightful king.

If Jesus is the king, then all his loyal subjects must recognize his kingship. The Jews did this by calling him the Son of David, and also by spreading their cloaks before him. This was the ancient custom; people threw down their garments to make a carpet for the royal procession. We recognize his sovereignty by laying our hearts before him, throwing down our wills in absolute surrender, and asking Jesus to govern everything we think and say and do. Then we praise him as our rightful king. In the words of the ancient hymn by Theodulph of Orleans:

All glory, laud, and honor to thee, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!
Thou art the King of Israel, thou David's royal Son,
who in the Lord's name comest, the King and blessed One!

The victorious king

The second thing that Jesus revealed by riding into Jerusalem is that he is the victorious king. Here we encounter a significant difficulty in the translation of the Old Testament. The text for Handel's oratorio reads, "He is the righteous Saviour," which makes Jesus sound like the one who does the saving. That is true enough! Jesus came to save his people from their sins.

That is not exactly what Zechariah promised, however. Charles Jennens has taken certain liberties with the biblical prophecy. "The Hebrew reads, 'He is righteous and saved.' This is indeed the reading of the Geneva Bible of 1560, the version that commanded the devotion of the English-speaking peoples before the King James Version: 'He is just and saved.' The ancient Greek translation, as well as Jerome's Latin Bible, rendered the passive form 'saved' as an active, 'saving.' The King James straddles the issue with its awkward and ambiguous 'having salvation'," a reading that is also adopted by the New International Version.

The question is this: Does the rightful king come to save or to be saved? Is he coming to bring salvation, or does he somehow need to be saved himself? Strangely enough, according to Zechariah's prophecy, the king himself will be saved. He is "righteous and saved." But how can this be? The Messiah did not come to *be* saved, but to save. The very reason for his coming is that God's people need a Savior. What good would it do for God to send us a Savior who himself is in need of salvation?

To understand this prophecy, it helps to recognize that the coming king does not need to be saved from his sins. Zechariah himself says that the rightful king is righteous ([Zechariah 9:9](#)). In other words, he does what is right and good. In the case of Jesus—who is the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy—the king is perfectly righteous. Jesus kept all of God's commandments. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" ([1 Peter 2:22](#)). All his thoughts were pure, all his words were true, and all his actions were just. If Jesus did not need to be saved from his sins, as he clearly did not, then in what sense was he saved? He was saved from death by the resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit. Although the Bible often uses the word "save" to refer to salvation from sin, it also uses the term in a more general way to refer to any kind of deliverance. For example, when the psalmist praised God for bringing Israel out of Egypt, he said, "He saved them from the hand of the foe" ([Psalm 106](#)). The Exodus did not save the Israelites from their sins, but it was a great deliverance, a mighty act of salvation. The word "save" is used in a similar way at the end of [Psalm 20](#): "O LORD, save the king!" ([Psalm 20:9](#)). That is not a prayer for the king's salvation from sin, but for his deliverance from his enemies. Or consider another example: King Solomon promised that God "will deliver the needy who cry out ... and save the needy from death" ([Psalm 72:12-13](#)). For Solomon, salvation meant deliverance from death. That is the kind of salvation Zechariah had in mind when he promised that the king would come "righteous and saved." He meant that God's rightful king would be delivered and vindicated. So perhaps the best translation comes from the Revised English Bible: "See, your king is coming to you, his cause won, his victory gained."

Once we understand what Zechariah meant when he promised that the king would be "saved," we can see why the gospels leave out this part of the prophecy. For example, Matthew simply says, "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey'" ([Matthew 21:5](#)). Matthew undoubtedly had the whole prophecy in mind, but he said nothing about the rightful king being victorious. The reason is that Jesus did not win his victory on Palm Sunday. Just a few days later, on Good Friday, the same city that welcomed him as king would call for his crucifixion. Jesus would be wrongfully convicted and brutally executed. He would not win his victory until Easter Sunday, when God saved him by raising him from the dead.

We can take this salvation one step further, however. The fact that God saved Jesus means that he can also save us. Now that Jesus himself has been delivered from death, he has the power to deliver us from death. The one who is "righteous and saved" is able to be our Savior.

The way to enter into this victory is to call on Jesus for salvation, which is what the crowds did when Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Even though they did not yet understand his crucifixion or his resurrection, they asked their rightful king to save them. They welcomed him as their victorious Savior, taking palm branches and shouting "Hosanna!" ([John 12:13](#)). Palm branches were an ancient symbol of victory. During the Maccabean revolt, the Jews minted coins with the image of a palm, emblematic of their victory over the Greeks. The word "Hosanna!" is not so much a word of praise as it is a prayer. Originally, it comes from [Psalm 118](#), where it is a cry for help: "O Lord, save us" ([Psalm 118:25](#)). Later it became an invocation of blessing and an acclamation of praise, what Fitzmyer terms, "a spontaneous cry of greeting or a cry of homage." But its most basic meaning is "Save!" or "Save us!" Therefore, by waving their palms and shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David!" the people were crying out for salvation from their victorious king.

The crowds hardly understood what they were saying. Many of them were looking for some kind of political deliverance, but that is not at all the kind of victory that Jesus came to win. He came to give his life as an atonement for sin. The salvation he offers is deliverance from sin, from death, and from the eternal wrath of God. Therefore, to ask for his salvation is to confess that you are a guilty sinner who deserves to be condemned for your sins. "Hosanna!" is partly a cry of victory; it recognizes that Jesus has the power to save. But it is also a cry of needy desperation, the prayer of a sinner who needs a Savior. "Save me, Jesus!" Or, as the people said on Palm Sunday, "Hosanna

to the Son of David!" Since Jesus is the Son of David—the rightful king—submit to his sovereign rule. Since he is praised with loud hosannas, ask the victorious king to be your gracious Savior.

The gentle king

In ancient times, when a king rode into a city, it was usually with a show of power and wealth. Thus one might have expected Jesus to enter Jerusalem at the head of a mighty army, bearing dazzling prizes for his royal treasury. But here is the surprising thing: the rightful king, the victorious king, is also the gentle king. Jesus comes to greet his subjects, not with pomp and circumstance, but with all humility and meekness.

Gentleness is one of the royal attributes Zechariah mentions in his prophecy: "See, your king comes to you ... gentle" ([Zechariah 9:9](#)). The king's gentleness is symbolized by his mode of transport. At the very least, one would expect Jesus to ride a horse. But instead of coming on a mighty war horse or a proud stallion, he rides a lowly beast of burden. He is riding a donkey, of all creatures—and a borrowed donkey, at that! Clarence Macartney writes:

How strange a contrast to the triumphal entry of ancient warriors and conquerors into the cities which they had taken! This time no wall broken down for entry; this time no garlanded hero standing in his war chariot, driving down the lane of cheering subjects past smoking altars, and followed by captive kings and princes in chains. Instead of that, just a meek and lowly man riding upon the foal of a donkey.

Another indication of his gentleness is the relationship Jesus has with his subjects. He treats them as members of his own family. Zechariah's prophecy begins: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!" ([Zechariah 9:9a](#)). The word "daughter" is a reminder that God regards his people as his own beloved children. The Old Testament often uses this kind of filial language. "This is what the Lord says: Israel is my first-born son" ([Exodus 4:22](#)). "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your Savior comes!' " ([Isaiah 62:11b](#)). God's love for his people is like the love a good father has for his own dear sons and daughters. Imagine a father going in to say good night to his little girl. She is already asleep, and in the darkness he can just make out the small shape of her body under the covers. He kneels down by her bedside, kisses her soft cheek, and then rests his head against her body. He can feel her chest breathing in and out, out and in. In the silence he whispers, "You are my precious girl!" Such is the tender love God has for his people. Out of the warmth of his heart he sends his gentle Son to be our king.

The king's gentleness is not a sign of weakness. The preceding verses ([Zechariah 9:1-8](#)) describe how God will destroy Israel's ancient enemies, like the Syrians and the Philistines. The following verse promises that the gentle king who rides the donkey will conquer mighty armies, with all their horses: "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth" ([Zech. 9:10](#)).

Although this part of Zechariah's prophecy is not quoted in the gospels, it is included in Handel's *Messiah*, with the phrase, "He shall speak peace unto the heathen." "Heathen" is an unfortunate choice of words because it has the connotation of godless paganism. But Zechariah simply meant Gentiles—the non-Jewish peoples of the world. His promise was that one day the gospel of peace would be preached to all the kingdoms of this world. This promise was fulfilled with the coming of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and King of

kings. When Jesus came riding into Jerusalem, he did not come to be the King of the Jews only, but to be the universal king. He came to save people from every people, tribe, language, and nation.

What Christ the King proclaims to the nations is peace. The Hebrews called it *shalom*, which is not simply the absence of warfare, but also the presence of welfare. *Shalom* is God's fullest blessing of harmony and prosperity. In order to bring such peace to the nations, the Messiah must disarm his enemies, breaking the bow of battle.

Here, then, is an extraordinary combination of omnipotence and gentleness. Perhaps the best word to describe it is "meekness," which means power under control. Some kings coddle their enemies; they lack the resolve to vanquish their foes. Others are fierce towards their own subjects; they rule with a rod of iron. But Jesus is the meekest of kings. He is a mighty and awesome potentate, strong and fierce enough to crush all his enemies. Remember Malachi's question: "Who may abide the day of his coming?" But this same Jesus is also tender, loving, and peaceful to everyone who trusts in him. He is gentle enough to care for all God's children.

One way Jesus displayed this unprecedented combination of omnipotence and gentleness was by performing miracles of healing. After announcing the coming of the king, Handel's *Messiah* quotes these words from the prophet Isaiah: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing" ([Isaiah 35:5-6](#)). These are the very miracles Jesus performed to confirm that he was the Messiah. When John the Baptist began to doubt whether Jesus really was the Christ, he was told, "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news preached to them" ([Matthew 11:4-5](#)). Since they fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament, these miracles offered proof that Jesus is the Messiah.

A miracle requires supernatural power. Only God can make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak. But as he performed these great miracles, Jesus also displayed uncommon gentleness. Often he healed people with a gentle touch. Jesus touched people with various illnesses and fevers, and with diseases like leprosy (e.g., [Matthew 8:3](#) & [Matthew 8:15](#)). By the power of his gentle touch they were healed. A blind man came and begged Jesus simply to touch him, and when Jesus reached out and touched the man's eyes, he was healed ([Mark 8:22](#); cf. [John 9:1-7](#)). Then there was the man who had his ear whacked off the night that Jesus was betrayed. Jesus "touched the man's ear and healed him" ([Luke 22:51](#)). Jesus performed these miracles with absolute authority, yet he also performed them with perfect gentleness. He was so gentle that people brought their babies to have him touch them ([Luke 18:15](#)). With the same regal grace, Jesus helps everyone who comes to him in faith. His kingship does not treat people roughly or abusively. Instead, he rules with a gentle strength that brings healing and wholeness. When we are disobedient, gentle Jesus restores us to the right path. When we are disheartened, gentle Jesus encourages us not to give up. When we are downcast, gentle Jesus wipes away our tears. Our rightful, victorious king has both the power to help us and the gentleness to heal us.

When John Newton preached on [Zechariah 9](#) back in the 17th century, he explained how wonderful it is to serve Jesus Christ, the gentle king: "Happy are these his subjects who dwell under his shadow. He rules them, not with that rod of iron by which he bruises and breaks the power of his enemies, but with his golden scepter of love. He reigns by his own right, and by their full and free consent, in their hearts. He reigns upon a throne of grace, to which they have at all times access; and from whence they receive, in answer to their prayers, mercy and peace, the pardon of all their sins, grace to help in every time of need, and a renewed supply answerable to all their wants, cares, services and conflicts."

If we are saved by such a gentle king, then we should serve him with all gentleness. Gentleness is one of the marks of the Christian, the fruit of God's Holy Spirit (see [Galatians 5:23](#)). Our lives should be living demonstrations of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" ([2](#)

[Corinthians 10:1](#)). Sadly, many Christians are harsh in their judgments, abrasive in their opinions, and rough in their handling of the weak. One would think that they serve a ruler who rides a high horse, rather than the gentle king who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. But those who love him best follow this command: "Let your gentleness be evident to all" ([Philippians 4:5](#)). Something of the Messiah's gentleness seems to have worked its way into the heart of George Friedrich Handel. Handel was not a gentle man, by most accounts. His musicians often found him difficult to work with because he was harsh in his judgments. Yet Handel donated all the proceeds from *Messiah* to the poor and the needy. When the oratorio was first performed in Dublin, the newspapers advertised it as follows:

For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's Street, and for the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Mr. Handel's new Grand Oratorio, call'd the Messiah.

This tradition continued throughout the composer's lifetime. According to one 18th-century historian, "From that time to the present, this great work has been heard in all parts of the kingdom with increasing reverence and delight; it has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan ... more than any single production in this or any country."

Handel's generosity was in keeping with the character of the Messiah himself, who healed the sick and made the children sing.

Conclusion

No wonder the crowds gave Jesus such a royal welcome! He was coming—with all gentleness—to be their rightful, victorious King. It must have been an amazing sight, not to mention an awesome sound. Jesus approached Jerusalem at the start of the Passover Feast, when hundreds of thousands of pilgrims were crowding into Jerusalem. As he came to Bethphage and mounted his donkey, he would have been surrounded by people going up to Jerusalem. When he reached the top of the Mount of Olives, and looked over the city of Jerusalem, he would have seen crowds of people streaming out the city gates. As the word spread that the king was coming, the pilgrims who were already in the city came out to greet him. Therefore, as Jesus rode down into the Kidron Valley, there were people in front of him, behind him, and all around him. They were waving palm branches and throwing down their robes to make a procession of praise. They kept shouting and shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" ([Matt. 21:9](#)).

It was exactly the kind of welcome Jesus deserves. He is the Son of David, our true and rightful king. To him we give all our high hosannas, for he is our gentle, gentle Savior. In the words of a hymn from the old *Strasbourg Psalter*,
Thou art the King of mercy and of grace,
reigning omnipotent in ev'ry place:
so come, O King, and our whole being sway;
shine on us with the light of thy pure day.

Thou hast the true and perfect gentleness,
no harshness hast thou and no bitterness:
make us to taste the sweet grace found in thee
and ever stay in thy sweet unity.