

## What others say about Easter

God proved his love on the Cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, "I love you".

**Billy Graham**

Do not abandon yourself to despair. We are the Easter people, and hallelujah is our song.

**John Paul II**

A man, who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.

**Mahatma Gandhi**

Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there.

**Clarence W Hall**

We live and die;  
Christ died and lived!

**John Stott**

To see how Christ was prophesied and described therein, consider and mark, how that the kid or lamb must be without spot or blemish; and so was Christ only of all mankind, in the sight of God and of his law.

**William Tyndale**

Salvation was bought not by Jesus' fist, but by His nail-pierced hands; not by muscle but by love; not by vengeance but by forgiveness; not by force but by sacrifice. Jesus Christ our Lord surrendered in order that He might win; He destroyed His enemies by dying for them and conquered death by allowing death to conquer Him.

**A W Tozer**



In the Sundays leading up to Easter, starting on March 8<sup>th</sup>, we will be exploring the meaning of the Easter events with particular focus on their relationship to Old Testament teaching.

When the risen Jesus met with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus he challenged their despair saying: "*How foolish you are and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ... And beginning with Moses and the prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Him!*" (Luke 24:25, 27)

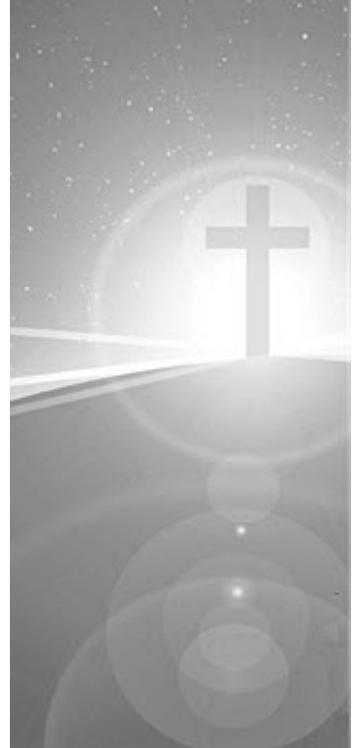
Later, that same evening He met with the Eleven in Jerusalem and reminded them: "*This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.*" (Luke 24:44)

In this series we will be following in the steps of Jesus. We will attempt to discover and interpret many of the Old Testament passages which he doubtless taught his disciples – ancient writings which looked forward to the Easter story, embracing His rapturous welcome into Jerusalem and subsequent betrayal, trial, death and resurrection.

Our hope is that you will use this booklet to prepare in advance of the preaching so that God's Word may truly come alive. We encourage you to read not only the Gospel accounts of the events but also the Old Testament passages that enrich and deepen our understanding of all that Jesus did and experienced.

May your study strengthen your conviction that God fulfils his promises and that His Word is trustworthy!

A caring community with every member equipped to demonstrate Christ, working with others to advance God's Kingdom in Chard and the world



Sunday 8 March

## The King – Triumphal Entry

Recommended reading:

Matthew 21:1-17  
Psalms 113-118  
Zechariah 9:9-13  
Isaiah 9:1-7  
Jeremiah 7:1-11

Let's travel to Jerusalem with the pilgrims, and discover that Jesus really is the King. He is the Saviour, the One anointed with the Spirit of God. He alone can save – He is the Christ!

In this Easter series we will see how the death and resurrection of King Jesus fulfilled God's promises, but first Matthew 21<sup>1-17</sup>, Mark 11<sup>1-19</sup> and Luke 19<sup>28-48</sup> tell how King Jesus entered Jerusalem.

It is important to understand the Old Testament background to Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem:

- Throughout the Old Testament God promised that the Anointed One [*Messiah* (Heb.) – *Christos* (Gk.)] would come to deliver and save His people. The prophets pointed forward to the coming of the anointed King. But Jesus was not what many devout Jews were expecting!
- Jesus and His disciples joined the pilgrims who travelled to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. The festival celebrates the Exodus when God's people were rescued from slavery in Egypt.

But Jesus, the Christ, the anointed King came to bring freedom from slavery to sin!

Interesting fact: Psalms 113 to 118 are sung during Passover. Ps.118 is often quoted in the New Testament.



## Passion Week – an overview

<b>Friday</b> Jn 12:1	Jesus arrives in Bethany, six days before the Passover, to stay with Lazarus (whom he had raised from the dead), Martha and Mary.
<b>Saturday</b>	Presumably spent in the traditional way, with his friends
<b>Sunday</b> Matt 21:1-11, Mk 11:1-11, Lk 19:28-44, Jn 12:12-19	The Triumphal Entry – Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey (see Zech 9:9) and is welcomed as Messiah with words from Ps 118
<b>Monday</b> Matt 21:12-17, Mk 11:15-18, Lk 19:45-48	Jesus finds the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple full of traders and money-changers, and clears it in dramatic fashion
<b>Tuesday</b> Mt 21:23-24:51, Mk 11:27-13:37, Lk 20:1-21:36	Jesus deals with the priests in Jerusalem who are trying to trap him, teaches the people to beware the Pharisees, predicts the destruction of the Temple and speaks of his own return
<b>Wednesday</b>	Putting Mk 14:1 and John 12:1 together, nothing seems to be said about this day
<b>Thursday</b> Matt 26:17-30, Mk 14:12-26, Lk 22:7-23	Jesus prepares himself and his disciples for his death, interpreting the Passover meal in a new way. After that, they go to Gethsemane where Jesus prays while the disciples doze
<b>Friday</b> Matt 27, Mk 15, Lk 22:66-23:56, Jn 18:28-19:37	Jesus is betrayed, arrested, abandoned, put on trial, denied three times by Peter, condemned, abused and forced to carry his cross to Golgotha, where he is crucified between two criminals
<b>Saturday</b>	Jesus's body was entombed Friday evening and 'rested' in the tomb throughout the Sabbath
<b>Sunday</b> Matt 28:1-10, Mk 16:1-8, Lk 24:1-49, Jn 20	The women find the tomb open and empty, an angel tells them Jesus is risen and gives them a message. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, Peter, Cleopas and another disciple on the way to Emmaus, and later all the disciples except Thomas

Sunday 5 April

## The Victory – Resurrection

Recommended reading:

- Luke 24
- Genesis 3:15, 21-24
- Psalm 16
- Isaiah 25, 53

**I know that my redeemer lives,  
and that in the end he will stand  
on the earth.**

**And after my skin has been destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I will see God;**

**I myself will see him  
with my own eyes – I, and not  
another.**

**How my heart yearns within me!**

Job 19:25-27

Every verse in Isaiah 53 is quoted in the New Testament, which has led many to call the chapter “the Gospel of Isaiah”.

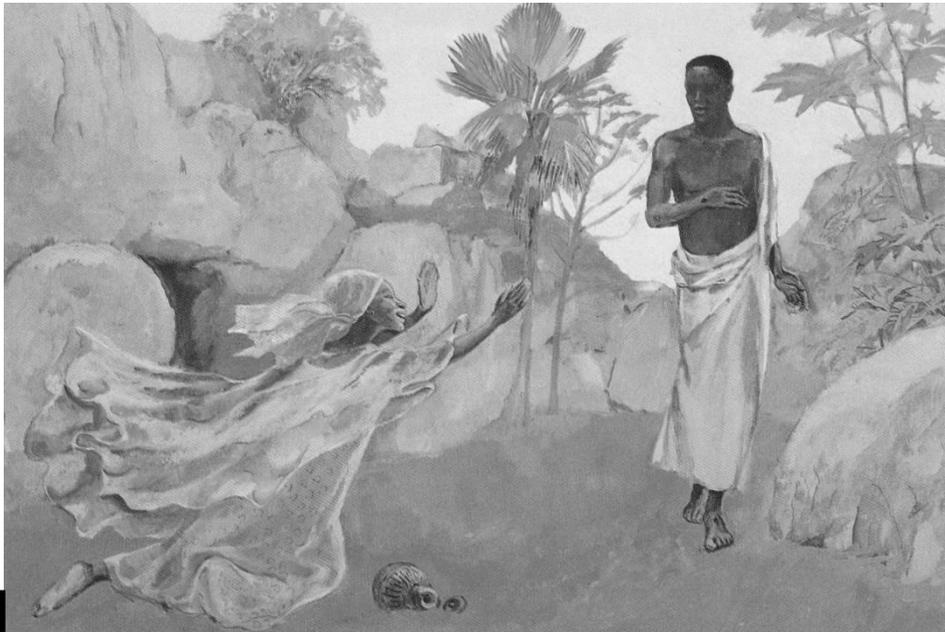
What we call chapters 52 & 53 of Isaiah is the climax of his revelation about “the Servant”. He reveals in astonishing detail an unprecedented and paradoxical ministry:

- exalted, yet disfigured and abused
- familiar with pain and suffering, yet would die to end the suffering of the world

- wounded, yet he would heal

- pierced and crushed, he would win us peace

- dignified in the face of oppression, speaking in defence of many
- killed as a sacrifice, cut off and put in the grave, yet seeing the light of life and the fruit of his suffering, and “prolonging his days”



Sunday 15 March

## The Covenant – Last Supper

Recommended reading:

- Luke 22:7-23
- Psalms 103, 105, 145
- Isaiah 55

**“And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he**

**took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”**



When we break bread together, it is rare to focus on the ‘new covenant’. Yet covenant was central to Old Testament thinking about the relationship of God to his people. Jesus was in effect replacing ‘old’ covenants. What can we learn from them that will help us understand our relationship with God?

The Last Supper was a Passover meal. Passover commemorated the birth of the nation of Israel, and there are clear instructions about celebrating it as a ‘lasting ordinance’ (Exodus 12:14) so it is all the more shocking that Jesus changed it to focus on himself instead, and called it a new covenant.

As we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, what can we learn from the distant echoes of the Old Covenant in our own meal together? There were covenants with Noah (Genesis 6:9), Abraham (Genesis 15:17), Moses (Exodus 19-24), and David (2 Samuel 7). They all teach us something about the relationship of God to his people, which is finally revealed in the covenant we have with God in Christ.

Sunday 22 March

## Betrayal – Judas, Peter and the trial

Recommended reading:

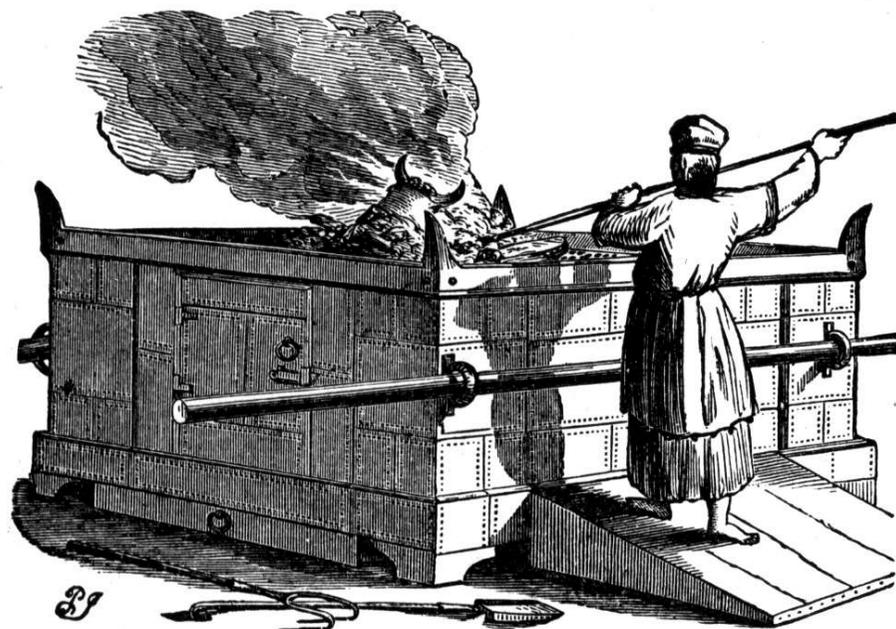
Mark 14  
Exodus 32  
Psalms 27, 109

Enter into the feeling of betrayal and begin to imagine what it must have been like for Jesus. Maybe you have experienced the pain of betrayal by someone close. Today is the day to surrender these feelings to your Heavenly Father and seek His healing.

Betrayal by close friends and fellow leaders was nothing new in the life of Israel. As Moses communed with God on Mt Sinai, Aaron, Moses own brother, incited by popular clamour betrayed not only Moses but God himself. (You can read about this in Exodus 32)

King David (Psalm 27) also understood opposition (v.2) the feeling of rejection (v.9,10) and the betrayal of false witnesses (v.12). Psalm 109 even more closely foreshadows the experience of Jesus – opposed, betrayed, accused and wrongly condemned.

Mark (ch.14) narrates an action-packed 24 hours that begins with a fellowship meal and ends with arrest, interrogation and trial. In between Judas, one of the Twelve, betrays his Lord with a kiss and Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers denies he even knows Him!



Sunday 29 March

## Atonement – The Cross

Recommended reading:

Luke 23  
Genesis 8,9  
Psalm 22  
Isaiah 53

The concept of a sacrifice to restore relationships between God and man stretches back to the beginning of the Old Testament writings. Noah, newly emerged from the ark offers a sacrifice to God (Gen 8:20) and is blessed with the rainbow (Gen 9:13) as a sign of God's covenant. Years later, Abraham, whose unswerving faith leads him to the brink of sacrificing Isaac, is led to say: "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." (Gen 22:8). These are prophetic words pointing forward to Jesus as the 'lamb of God' (John 1:29).

**Reflect on the price that Christ paid for you and the wonder that our relationship with God has been restored.**

But sacrifice is always costly, and the psalmist provides the words later used by Jesus on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1) an utterance that hints at Christ's agony in being cut off from his Father as he bore mankind's sin.

Nowhere is the Cross more clearly portrayed than in Isaiah 53. Not only is the significance of his death explained: "...He was pierced for our transgressions ... the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him ..." (v. 5) but the detail of his execution and burial are clearly depicted.

Luke 23 documents in graphic detail Jesus' trial, crucifixion and burial. A particular significant event is that Jesus' death coincides with the rending of the curtain in the temple (v. 45) thus demonstrating that the way back to God (Atonement) had been achieved through Christ's sacrifice (Hebrews 10:19-22; 1 Peter 3:18).