

**The Messiah**  
He Said, "I Am"  
John 12:12-16; 4:26; 13:19  
March 25, 2018

The Sunday School teacher was extremely enthusiastic. She looked at the class of 4 year olds and asked this question: "Does anyone know what today is?"

A little girl held up her hand and said, "Yes, today is Palm Sunday." "That's fantastic!" the teacher replied. "Does anyone know what next Sunday is?"

The same little girl held up her hand and said, "Next Sunday is Easter Sunday." Again the teacher replied, "That's great!"

Then the teacher asked, "Does anyone know what makes next Sunday Easter?" The little girl again responded, "Yes, next Sunday is Easter Sunday because Jesus rose from the grave."

But before the teacher could again congratulate her, she continued, "But if he sees his shadow, he has to go back in for seven weeks!"

Believe it or not, there is still confusion about what is about to happen this week, as well as confusion about Who this week is all about.

We have spent the last few weeks in a series called "He said, 'I Am.'" Turn to page 7 in your bulletin. We've looked at the incredible statements Jesus made of Himself using the Greek words *ego eimi*.<sup>1</sup> We translate them, "I Am." *ego eimi* is the Greek equivalent to Yahweh, the Hebrew name for God. Jesus is saying, "I am God" by saying *ego eimi*.

Today, we are going to consider the one statement about Jesus that confused the people and the religious leaders of His day, especially regarding Who He was.

He told the woman at the Samaritan well:

*Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"*<sup>2</sup>

He told the disciples:

*I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah.*<sup>3 4</sup> *ego eimi*.

Much had been said and written about the Messiah, the one who would save His people. The Jews eagerly awaited His coming as they suffered under the rule of the powerful Romans. The crowds on that first Palm Sunday, having heard all the stories of the traveling preacher from Nazareth, who was now coming into Jerusalem, they too wandered if indeed Jesus was the Messiah. And still today, 2,000 years later, people still are not sure Jesus is the Messiah, God's anointed.

Today, I want to see how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies regarding the Messiah. So I invite you to take some notes.

**First of all, He was born in Bethlehem.**

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<sup>1</sup> εγω ειμι

<sup>2</sup> John 4:26 (NLT)

<sup>3</sup> John 13:19 (NLT)

<sup>4</sup> In both these passages, the NLT adds the word Messiah. The passages literally read, "Then Jesus told her, "*ego eimi*." "He told the disciples, 'I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that *ego eimi*.'"

Some 700 years before that first Palm Sunday, the Old Testament prophet Micah wrote this incredible prophecy:

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.*<sup>5</sup>

The religious leaders knew this passage of Scripture. When Magi from the East came to King Herod looking for a newborn king for whom a star had announced, they responded by citing this Old Testament prophecy.

The people knew that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem. In John 7, we read these words:

*When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, "Surely this man is the Prophet we've been expecting." Others said, "He is the Messiah." Still others said, "But he can't be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee? For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born."*<sup>6</sup>

Little did they know that Jesus, who grew up in Galilee, was in truth born in that little town of Bethlehem. So on that first Palm Sunday, the people hoped their Messiah had arrived:

*So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord— the King of Israel!"*<sup>7</sup>

**The second Messianic prophecy Jesus fulfilled was this: He was from the tribe of Judah.**

This prophecy is one of the oldest of all the messianic prophecies. It comes from none other than Jacob, the grandson of the patriarch Abraham. As he was nearing death, he gathered his 12 sons and prophesied over each of them. Over the 4<sup>th</sup> son Judah, he said these words:

*The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from his descendants, until the coming of the one to whom it belongs, the one whom all nations will honor.*<sup>8</sup>

So everyone knew that a descendant of Judah would be king. In fact, this had come true before through David. David was from the line of Judah, as were all of the kings of Judah.

Jesus as well was from the tribe of Judah. When the angel Gabriel came to Mary to announce Jesus' birth, Luke writes:

*In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.*<sup>9</sup>

The Bible makes it clear that both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David and thus from the tribe of Judah. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Jacob.

**Third, Jesus was born of a virgin.**

We've heard the Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah:

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<sup>5</sup> Micah 5:2 (NLT)

<sup>6</sup> John 7:40-42 (NLT)

<sup>7</sup> John 12:13 (NRSV)

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 49:10 (NLT)

<sup>9</sup> Luke 1:26-27 (NLT)

*All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').*<sup>10</sup>

Of course, we know that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born. When the angel told her she was going to have a son, Mary said:

*"But how can this happen? I am a virgin." The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God."*<sup>11</sup>

Just as Isaiah said, the virgin Mary did indeed conceive and have a Son who is called Immanuel. Jesus, being born of a virgin and the prophecy of this event show God's infinite power and knowledge. He defied nature to bring His Son to the earth.

#### **Fourth, Jesus performed miracles.**

We all know Jesus performed miracles during His ministry on earth. Who can think of one?

Well, Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would indeed do miracles. From Isaiah 35:5-6, we read:

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;*<sup>12</sup>

Some 700 years after Isaiah, the people on the streets of Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday knew that Jesus healed people and did incredible miracles. And it wasn't just the people. We read this from John 11:47:

*Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. "What are we going to do?" they asked each other. "This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation."*<sup>13</sup>

So the Sanhedrin, the high council of the leading priests and Pharisees, knew before that first Palm Sunday that Jesus was not only a miracle worker, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, but that He was a threat to their power and position. It would be this council who 5 days later would vote to send Jesus to Pilate for crucifixion.

#### **Fifth, Jesus rode a donkey.**

Near 500 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Zechariah wrote:

*Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt.*<sup>14</sup>

Luke records the first Palm Sunday:

*Then they brought [the colt of a donkey] to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name*

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<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 7:14 (NLT)

<sup>11</sup> Luke 1:34-35 (NLT)

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 35:5-6 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> John 11:47-48 (NLT)

<sup>14</sup> Zechariah 9:9 (NLT)

*of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."<sup>15</sup>*

The Pharisees knew the prophecy, and they were watching it unfold before their eyes, yet they had already rejected Jesus as their Messiah and wanted Him to stop. But even if no one else gives Jesus praise, nature, even rocks, will be more than willing to shout out, "Jesus is the Messiah."

Yet within a few days, the 6<sup>th</sup> Messianic prophecy would be fulfilled: **Jesus was rejected by His people.**

In biblical times, building foundations were built from stone, starting with a single stone placed in the corner as a guide for the entire structure. The cornerstone was essential to the structure of the building and ensured each wall would be balanced, straight and solid.

Psalms 118 tells us Jesus was sent to be the cornerstone for the world but, He would be rejected in the process:

*The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. [So] This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.<sup>16</sup>*

Later in the book of Matthew, there's a conversation with the religious leaders where Jesus uses these words from Psalm 118 to remind them who He was:

*Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?'"<sup>17</sup>*

Of course, it would be 5 short days later that this prophecy would be fulfilled as Jesus was standing before the Roman governor Pilate

*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 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!"<sup>18</sup>*

**Finally, Jesus suffered with (and for) sinners.**

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah, whose name means "salvation of the Lord," foretold the coming of Messiah throughout his book, and especially in chapter 53 where

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<sup>15</sup> Luke 19:35-40 (NRSV)

<sup>16</sup> Psalm 118:22-24 (NRSV)

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 21:42 (NRSV)

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 27:15-23 (NRSV)

he predicts just how much Jesus would suffer during His sacrifice for our sins. Verse 12 tells us:

*Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.<sup>19</sup>*

Of course we know this prophecy was fulfilled on Golgotha:

*Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him [criminals<sup>20</sup>], one on either side, with Jesus between them. And Pilate posted a sign over him that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."<sup>21</sup>*

On that first Palm Sunday, the people wondered if this Jesus was the Messiah. The Pharisees worried that this Jesus thought He was the Messiah. And people still today dismiss the thought that Jesus is the Messiah, in spite of these 7 and then nearly 300 prophecies that found their fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth.

Rabbi Slostowski, a professor at a seminary in Tel Aviv, hated Christianity and the idea that Jesus was the Messiah. So great was his resentment that he sharply criticized a young student whom he found was reading a Hebrew New Testament. The young man replied by giving him the copy. That night, the rabbi, alone in his room, stayed up until 3 in the morning reading about the Nazarene who claimed to be the Messiah. The Holy Spirit guided him to all truth, and later he confessed, "I have already found more than 200 passages of the New Testament that prove beyond a doubt that Jesus is truly the Messiah."

What about you? Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed One, sent by God to save His people?

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<sup>19</sup> Isaiah 53:12 (NRSV)

<sup>20</sup> See Luke 23:32

<sup>21</sup> John 19:17-19 (NLT)