

Lead In Welcome to the church at Bethel, where we gather because of the **gospel**: Jesus in our place! Let our round of applause be a big welcome to those watching online and our guests here in person for family day.

Let me take a quick moment to share what the Lord is doing in this local church. In the past two weeks, Bethel sent out two mission teams. This past Sunday, we had our highest in-person attendance (non-special service) in over five years. This past Sunday, we have more kids (birth-6th grade) than in the past fifteen years. We need to prepare for more growth, and we want you to be part of making a difference. Where is your **SERVE?**

Today we begin a two-week mini-series in the Passion narrative – the week leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection. First, we will examine how it all **began**, and next week we will open the Word and our hearts to how it **finished**.

Palm Sunday: How It All Began (Mark 1:1-6 & 11:1-8)

Preparing the Way – Mark 1:1-6 and 11:1-8 describe Yahweh preparing the world to receive His only Son as Savior and Lord.

Early on, we meet a man named John the Baptist, sent by the Father **ahead** of Jesus to **prepare** the way. John the Baptist was a unique messenger. Scriptures describe him as a voice, crying out in the wilderness, wearing a stylish prophetic coat of camel's hair and the world's **first paleo diet** – locust and wild honey.

John the Baptist's job was to prepare the world for the incarnation – God in the flesh!

While you might find John's **diet gross**, locusts were the only insects permitted as food by the Mosaic law. If you find John's **fashion outdated**, remember that Elijah dressed the same way. If you find John's **neighborhood lacking amenities**, note that the wilderness was where God met and prepared a place for His holy community in the Old Testament. John's entire existence prepared the way for others to know Jesus!

And with one singular voice, John **cried out** in the wilderness. His message came from the heart and was addressed to the heart. The one who was shouting was God; the mouthpiece was John.

You might not have a John the Baptist in your life, but God is not finished preparing the way for His Son, Jesus. You are hearing this message today because the Father has and continues to prepare the path for Jesus.

Take-Home: What circumstances, joys, triumphs, failures, life changes, 21 days of prayer, and even barriers is Yahweh shaping to draw you near today? How is God preparing the way in your life?

In the triumphal approach narrative (Mark 11), we again find our Heavenly Father preparing the world to receive His Son, Jesus. But, this time, the way is not in the wilderness but a road to Jerusalem. Jesus' disciples, at the Messiah's personal request, receive a colt for transportation. **Nowhere else in the Gospels will you find Jesus riding, but He does here. You see, an unriden colt was a sacred animal that made it appropriate for a king, and no one else could ride a king's horse.**

In response, the crowd began to remove their outer garments and set them upon the horse and along the road. These actions were abundantly extravagant and the ancient version of **rolling out the red carpet**. Nevertheless, the crowd knew that Jesus was unlike any other person they had ever met, and they wanted to prepare the way.

Take-Home: **How are you preparing your heart and life for the Messiah?** How are you preparing others to hear the Gospel?

The Lord doesn't only have a way to prepare; He has a message to proclaim to the world! You have already read what John and the crowd **did** in response to the Messiah; now, hear what they **said**.

Read Mark 1:7-8 and 11:9-10

Proclaiming the Worth – John the Baptist prepared the way for the incarnation calling the entire Judean countryside to **repentance**. What did John require of the people? Repentance is more than being sorry. **Biblical repentance is a change of mind and action upon realizing that you have sinned and that sin is wrong.** William Gurnall described repentance in this way, **"To forsake sin is to leave it without any thought reserved of returning to it again."**

Take-Home: **You proclaim the worth of Jesus when you genuinely repent of your sin and say, "Jesus, I will leave it all behind for you!"** Do you find yourself going back to sin? Have you truly repented with no thoughts of going back? Does your sin grieve you? **Repentance is the tear of love dropping from the eye of faith when it fixes on Christ crucified.**

John continued his message with more specificity. **Mark 1:7** **"One who is more powerful than I am is coming after me. I am not **worthy** to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals.** Notice that John didn't say a person but **the One**. **To undo the sandals was the menial task of a servant of a Gentile servants and Jewish servants were not required to stoop down in such a manner.** Later, John would say (John 3:30), **He must increase, but I must decrease.**

Take-Home: **You proclaim the worth of Jesus when you refuse to take glory for yourself.** May our lives constantly fade away in the distance compared to the all-surpassing value of seeing and knowing Jesus!

Now hear the voice of the crowd at the triumphal approach. Jesus, riding on the back of a young horse never ridden before, is preceded by a multitude of his followers who run ahead shouting: *Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father, David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!*

Clearly, this is no ordinary day, no ordinary crowd, and no common entry. The congregation began to sing and chant from Psalm 118, **a Hallel Psalm recited on joyous occasions like Passover, Shavuot (Weeks), and Sukkot (Booths)**. By joyously trumpeting Psalm 118, the people proclaimed that the God who saved in Exodus was the same God who saves today.

Take-Home: When was the last time you joyously proclaimed that life, death, and resurrection are found in Jesus Christ? Are you a Hosanna person?

Hearing the **content** the content of the crowd, we now turn our attention to the **tone** of their voices. Mark describes it this way, they **shouted!** We are never told why they shouted. Exuberance? So God in heaven could hear? To rouse the people of Jerusalem?

In Mark, we have only ten references to shouting: **four from demons, one from a father crying, “I do believe, help my unbelief and once by the triumphal crowd.** Only two times in Mark do we find a person or group shouting twice.

A blind beggar man shouted, **“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”** This shout is the voice of a man who needed help. This cry was the guttural declaration of a man who required mercy!

How does Jesus respond to shouts of mercy? Mark 10:52 Jesus said to him, **“Go, your faith has saved you.”** Did you know the Father always responds with kindness to every authentic prayer for mercy?

There is one more group that shouted twice in Mark. At the same festival of the triumphal approach, a man named Pilate asked the crowd, **“what do you want me to do with King of the Jews?”** Twice the multitude shouted, **crucify Him, crucify Him!** In contrast to the blind man, this cry was the guttural declaration of a crowd who wanted no mercy!

Take-Home: If you had to shout today, would your cry be for your need for mercy, or could you care less? **All of our lives are shouting something.**

How did it all begin? With a voice crying out in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord. God is still in the preparing business. He prepares your life to know Jesus as your Savior and King.

When you receive Him, you proclaim him. Like John, may our lives constantly fade away in the distance compared to the all-surpassing worth of seeing and knowing Jesus!

So What?

What if I told you that the shouting **crowds didn't have the last word?** A later cry echoes the voice crying out in the wilderness:

Mark 15:37 Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ Then, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ When the centurion, who was standing opposite him, saw the way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

Prepared hearts lead to lives of proclamation that He is worthy!

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ² As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

Beginning

It is the beginning, not of Mark's book, but the facts of the gospel. Mark shows from the prophets that the gospel was to begin by the sending forth of a forerunner. Each evangelist has a different starting point. Mark starts with the work of John the Baptist, Matthew with the ancestry and birth of the Messiah, Luke with the birth of the Baptist, and John with the pre-incarnate Word (Wuest).

Gospel

The "gospel" is an important subject in Mark. The word *euangelion* appears seven times (also 1:14–15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; and 14:9. Cf. also 16:15) versus only four times in Matthew and none in Luke and John (but Matthew has the cognate verb once and Luke ten times). By his frequent use of the term, Mark emphasized the freshness and even revolutionary character of the message of Jesus. This message offered hope to the neglected and oppressed (NAC).

Of the gospel, *euaggelion* (εὐαγγέλιον), "a message of good news." This word was in common use in the first century for good news of any kind. The proclamation of the accession of a new Roman emperor was entitled "good news." The evangelists appropriate the word, take it out of the current secular usage, and speak of the message of salvation as good news (Wuest).

In classical Greek (where it was normally plural, like the English good news), it originally meant the reward given to the bearer of good news and then came to refer to the good news itself (NIGTC, 52).

Jesus

The name "Jesus" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Joshua" (both words have been anglicized), which means *Yahweh* (or simply *God*) *saves*. As a common name in the first century, it was shared by two or three other persons who are mentioned in the New Testament: Barabbas (Matt 27:16–17, NRSV, NEB), Jesus Justus (Col 4:11), and Joshua (Acts 7:45; Heb 4:8, KJV; see explanation above). Josephus referred to about twenty different persons who had the name. Mark used it eighty times without stressing the theological significance of the name (NAC).

Christ

The Greek word “Christ” is the equivalent of the Hebrew “Messiah” (again, both are anglicized) and is actually translated as “Messiah” in some passages by the NRSV, NEB, REB, and GNB. Both mean *the anointed one*, i.e., a person commissioned by God for a special task. In the Old Testament, priests (Exod 29:7, 21), prophets (1 Kgs 19:16), and kings (1 Sam 10:1) were anointed for special tasks. Mark did not describe Jesus as a priest, and he said very little explicitly about him as a prophet (cf. 6:4, 15; 8:28); but in 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32, he described him as the king of the Jews/Israel. In the first century, some Jews looked forward to an anointed king who, they hoped, would restore the kingdom of David and consummate the age. The term “Christ” or “Messiah” was originally a title, but by Mark’s day, it was on the way to becoming a proper name (cf. 9:41). The word appears only seven times in Mark (here; 8:29; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21; 14:61; 15:32; also 1:34 as a variant reading), probably reflecting accurately the reluctance of Jesus to employ it or to accept it when used by others because of its nationalistic connotations. The only instance where Jesus used it with reference to himself is 9:41, and there is an oblique way. For Mark and his readers/hearers, Jesus was the one above all others who was anointed by God for the greatest task of all times. Evidently, at his baptism (1:9–11), Jesus was formally anointed for his special mission (NAC).

Son of God

In Rome, the emperor is called a god, and we are informed that his birth or advent on the human scene already augurs good things for the world. Mark is making a parallel claim about the divinity of Jesus (BW3, 69).

The birthday of the emperor was celebrated throughout the empire and was the occasion of festivals called *evangels*.

Isaiah

Isaiah the prophet” (40:3) supplies only that part of the quotation in v. 3. The part in v. 2 is from Mal 3:1, perhaps with an allusion to Exod 23:20 as well (the same word means *angel* and *messenger*). Reinterpreted the Old Testament text in order to apply it to their own situation, in addition to quoting it loosely from memory. Malachi 4:5 probably identifies the “messenger” of Mal 3:1 as Elijah. Mark 9:11–13 almost certainly identifies John as the Elijah-like person who precedes Christ in his suffering. Also, John’s preaching of repentance in v. 4 (cf. 1 Kgs 18:37; Mal 4:6) and the description of him in v. 6 (cf. 2 Kgs 1:8) recall Elijah. The significance of the quotation is that both John and Jesus appeared as a result of divine providence. Mark quoted from the Old Testament infrequently, and elsewhere his citations are part of a quotation of one of his characters, usually Jesus (NAC).

**See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way.**

³ **A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:**

**Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight!**

John's message, like that of the prophets, consisted first of a call to repentance. The Greek word translated "repentance" literally means a *change of mind*, but its New Testament meaning has been greatly influenced by that of several Old Testament words so that it refers to returning to God and changing one's whole course of life. The word translated as "forgiveness" means *sending away or remission*.

I send, *apostellō* (ἀποστέλλω), literally, "to send someone off" from one's self; The word is used in an early secular document in the clause, "to proceed with the officers *sent* for this purpose." The sense here is that the officers were commissioned to do something. In Herodotus and the LXX, the noun form of this word is used for an ambassador or an envoy. Thus, the Baptist was an ambassador or envoy representing God and sent on a commission to perform certain duties (Wuest).

Messenger, *aggelos* (ἄγγελος); in a 2 b.c. manuscript, envoys, whose names are given; the verb form means "to proclaim." Thus, the word refers to a messenger who is an envoy bearing a message. The Greek word comes into English in the word "angel" and is so given in its proper context in the New Testament (Wuest).

Way

Way, *hodos* (ὁδος), "a traveled way, a road." The idea would be clearer if one translated by the word "road."

The emphasis is on making the way straight in the wilderness, not on the voice crying there (BW3, 73).

In Exodus 23:20, the messenger who will lead the people is not a human guide or even Moses, but a divine messenger of Yahweh (PNTC, 27).

Crying/Shouting

Of one crying, *boaō* (βοᾶω), "to cry aloud, to shout, to speak with a high, strong voice." *Kaleō* (καλέω) in classic usage meant "to cry out" for a purpose, *boaō* (βοᾶω) "to cry out" as a manifestation of feeling. The preaching of the Baptist was full of emotion, of

feeling. It came from the heart and was addressed to the heart. John said, “I am a voice of One shouting out in the wilderness” (John 1:23). The One shouting out was God. John was His mouthpiece. Back of John’s preaching to Israel, and in and through it, was the infinite longing of the God of Israel for His chosen people. The heart of God was in that message, full of pathos and love, and entreaty. **In the wilderness**, *erēmos* (ἐρημος); the word signifies “a solitary, lonely, desolate, uninhabited place.” Here it refers to the uncultivated regions fit for pasturage in Judaea (Wuest).

Wilderness

It has a much more positive significance than merely a withdrawal from ordinary life. It is Isaiah’s prophecy of the voice that provided the rationale and foundation of the Essene community at Qumran, for the wilderness was a place of hope, of new beginnings. It was in the wilderness where Yahweh met with his people when they fled Egypt (NIGTC, 57).

Both the MT and LXX “in the desert” designate the place where God will prepare the way for his people (PNTC, 27).

Preparing the way

Now, a unique role of the Holy Spirit is to prepare hearts to receive Jesus as the true Son of God.

What Does He do? Essential for Salvation (John 3:5) If the Holy Spirit is given to and remains with those who love God if those who do not love God are unable to receive the Spirit, how can we love God? In response to this question, “how can one be born again.” **John 3:5** Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit.

To enter the kingdom, you must be born of the Spirit. The essential role of the Holy Spirit is to convict of sin, display your shortfall and sinful condition, and draw you to the Messiah. If the Spirit has not stirred your soul to run to Jesus Christ, you have not been born of the Spirit.

What Does He Do? Counselor (John 14:15) παρακλητος, (a title for the Holy Spirit) one who helps by consoling, encouraging, or mediating on behalf. Have you ever felt like you were in over your head and you needed help? The Holy Spirit is the helper in our time of need, the counselor in our time of doubt, and the encourager in our time of discouragement.

However, the counselor and the comforter come with risks. “Why would we need to experience the Comforter if our lives are already comfortable?” – Francis Chan.

What Does He Do? The Will of God (John 14:17) John 14:17 exhorts us that the Spirit remains with you and will be in you. The Greek here (remain) means to continue to exist. Often, we concern ourselves with the will of the Lord for our lives. We know that God has two levels of will: his sovereign will, which is over all things, and his commanded will (honor your father and mother), which we as moral agents have free will to do. Is it possible that we are seeking the knowledge of God’s will rather than obeying and abiding?

Mark 1:4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Repentance

The baptism of repentance. No article in Greek. It should be “a baptism of repentance.” The latter word is a genitive of description, indicating what kind of baptism is meant. It was a baptism connected with the repentance of the individual. The word is *metanoia* (μετανοια), made up of a preposition that, when prefixed to a word, signifies a change, and the Greek word for “mind.” It thus means “a change of mind” as it appears in a person who repents of a purpose he has formed or something he has done. Robertson quotes Broadus as saying that this is the worst translation in the New Testament. “Repent,” he says, “means to be sorry again.” John did not call on Israel to be sorry but to change their mental attitude and conduct. The word for “sorry” in Greek is *metameleomai* (μεταμελεομαι) and is used by Judas (Matt. 27:3). The word used here (*metanoia* (μετανοια)) means “a change of mind and thus of action consequent upon the realization that one has sinned and that sin is wrong.” *Metamelomai* (Μεταμελομαι) is sorrow for sin because of its evil consequences. This is remorse. Vincent, commenting on this phrase, says, “A baptism the characteristic of which was repentance, which involved an obligation to repent.” (Wuest)

Jewish people also practiced “repentance” when they did something wrong, asking God’s forgiveness and determining to change. (The Old Testament prophets often used this Hebrew idea of “turning” from sin; it involves more than just a “change of mind,” which is the literal sense of the Greek term used here.) But the ultimate example of

repenting, or turning from a wrong way of living to a right way of living, was when a non-Jew decided to obey the teachings of Israel's God (IVP).

To tell Jewish people that they had to be baptized or repent the same way non-Jews did would have been offensive because it challenged the prevalent Jewish belief about salvation. Most Jewish people thought that if they were born into a Jewish family and did not reject God's law, they would be saved; John told them instead that they had to come to God the same way that non-Jews did. The point of John's baptism is that everyone has to come to God on the same terms.

Neither repentance avails without grace, nor grace without repentance; for repentance must first condemn sin, that grace may blot it out. –Ambrose

There would appear to be something radical about John's message. He seems to have been offering forgiveness without sacrifice being offered in the temple. He was offering remission of sins without connection to the hierarchical system in Jerusalem (BW3, 72).

⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. ⁶ John wore a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.

Camel Hair and Honey

Some other poor people in John's day dressed the way he did and ate locusts and honey (the Dead Sea Scrolls even give directions concerning the eating of locusts). But what is most important here is that the Old Testament emphasizes that Elijah dressed this way and, like John, did not depend on society for his sustenance (cf. 1 Kings 17:4, 9). Elijah was expected to return before the end (Mal 3:1; 4:5–6).

Wild honey. Vincent quotes Tristram in *Land of Israel*; "The innumerable fissures and clefts of the limestone rocks, which everywhere flank the valleys, afford in the recesses secure shelter for any number of swarms of wild bees; and many of the Bedouin, particularly about the wilderness of Judaea, obtain their subsistence by bee-hunting, bringing into Jerusalem jars of that wild honey on which John the Baptist fed in the wilderness" This, together with dried locusts which were considered palatable, was the chief source of John's food (Wuest).

John's diet, if simple and monotonous, was nutritious. Locusts are the only type of insect permitted as food in the Mosaic law. See Leviticus 11:20-23 (NIGTC, 69). They are still eaten with relish by those in whose lands they flourish today.

Mark 1:7 He proclaimed, “One who is more powerful than I am is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals.

John’s message concerned not only a way of life and a rite symbolizing that way of life but a person. The concepts of a coming one and a powerful one have messianic implications. The concept of baptism “with the Holy Spirit” (v. 8) fulfills Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 11:19; 36:26–27; 37:14; Joel 2:28–29 (NAC).

One

A definite article is used. There cometh “the One,” not merely “one.” It was a distinctive, unique, outstanding Person, even the Jehovah of the Old Testament who was to come.

I am not worthy

I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. This was the menial task of a slave in an oriental household who took off the guest’s sandals and washed their feet as they entered the home. John was anxious that men would not form a wrong impression of him and his ministry. He took place beneath that of an oriental slave. This is the man who said of the King whom he was proclaiming, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). “Increase” is the translation of *auxanō* (αὐξανω) “to become greater,” “decrease,” the translation of *elattaō* (ἐλατταω) “to be made less” indignity, authority, and popularity. “Must” is *dei* (δει), “it is necessary in the nature of the case.” What John said in its fulness was, “It is necessary in the nature of the case for that One to be constantly growing greater, but for me to be constantly growing inferior in dignity, authority, and popularity.” The necessity in the nature of the case was that John was only the herald, Jesus, the King whom he announced. The former must constantly be fading away into the distance, while the latter must increasingly become into the foreground (Wuest).

Seeking Christ with his eyes, he (John) refused to look at anything else. – Jerome in Letters to Rusticus.

⁸ I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The implication is that John’s water baptism merely prepares the way. It also suggests that the Gospels intend to imply that even Christian water baptism on its own is inadequate (NIGTC, 71).

Water and Spirit are not natural opposites. One is physical and the other spiritual so that the physical direct our attention to the supernatural (NIGTC, 71).

Also, it's important to note that the only NT passages that contrast a baptism of water and baptism of spirit are those which contrast the baptism practiced by John. See Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; and John 1:33).

This is an extraordinary declaration, for, in the PT, the bestowal of the Spirit belongs exclusively to God. John's declaration, according to Mark, transfers the bestowal of the Spirit to Jesus (PNTC, 33).

Mark 11:1 When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ^{two} and told them, “Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here right away.’”

The traditional description of the triumphal entry is not the best. Mark describes Jesus' approach, not his entry (NIGTC, 430).

Mark 11:4 So they went and found a colt outside in the street, tied by a door. They untied it, ⁵ and some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ They answered them just as Jesus had said, so they let them go.

Mark 11:7 They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their clothes on the road, and others spread leafy branches cut from the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted:

Nowhere else in the gospels do we read of Jesus riding (NIGTC, 428).

He began with a manger and finished with a donkey, in Bethlehem with a manger, in Jerusalem with a donkey. – Ephrem the Syrian.

An unbroken beast of burden was regarded as sacred (Numbers 19:2, which made it appropriate for a king since, according to the Mishnah (m. Sanh. 2:5) no one else may ride a king's horse (PNTC, 336).

Clothes

These actions are unnecessary and extravagant. Clothes were laid on the road as a red carpet for a dignitary and provided a festive floor covering (NIGTC, 433).

Crowd

We can assume this is the same crowd mentioned as following Jesus and his disciples as they leave Jericho for Jerusalem. See also 15:40-41. This is not yet the Jerusalem crowd but the pilgrims who are accompanying him and his disciples to the city for the festival (NIGTC, 430).

These are not the same crowds. The Galilean pilgrims shouted Hosana as they approached the city, the Jerusalem crowd shouted crucify him! The women of Mark 15:40-41 are distinguished from the mocking onlookers and the soldiers in the crowd. Their enthusiasm and faith have survived sufficiently to keep them

even at this gruesome scene, standing apart from the mocking citizens of Jerusalem.

It is, in any case, not at all clear that we are to think the crowds understood that all this symbolized that Jesus was the Messiah, not least because Jesus is not conforming to the expectations of the warrior messianic figure (BW3, 310).

Shouting

From the same crowds that accompanied Jesus up from Jericho. In Mark, only ten references to shouting: unclean spirits (Mark 3:11), demon-possessed man (5:5), demon (5:5), father of possessed boy – a cry of faith (9:24), demon (9:25), blind man (10:47, 48) triumphal approach (11:9), the crowd of accusers in Jerusalem (15:13, 14).

Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes

in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰ **Blessed is the coming kingdom**

of our father, David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Psalm 118

Psalm 118 was used in times of festal celebrations as a hymn of royal entry on the occasion of an annual ritual of reenthronement (NICNT)

Psalm 118 has intricate ties to the work and message of the NT and Jesus. McCann does not find this surprising as Psalm 118 is the final psalm of the Hallel collection used during Passover (McCann, 167). Also, he finds that 118:22-23 had messianic undertones during 1st century Judaism (McCann, 167). Yet another key tie to the NT is the continual cry to the Lord as salvation within the psalm concerning past events, especially the Exodus (118:14—see Exodus 15:2) and 118:28 (McCann, 167). Also, the terminology of the Lord's right hand is found connected to the Exodus account (Ex. 15:6)

Like the other royal psalms, Ps 118 came to be imbued with messianic import (WBC, 167)

Hallel consists of six Psalms (113–118), which are recited as a unit on joyous occasions ^[1], including the three pilgrim festivals mentioned in

the Torah, Pesach (Passover), Shavuot, and Sukkot (the "bigger" Jewish holy days), as well as at Hanukkah and Rosh Chodesh (beginning of the new month).

Martin Luther called this psalm, his favorite in the psalter, "my own beloved psalm."

He put verse 17, "I will not die, but live, and tell of the works of the Lord," on a plaque on his study wall, where he could see it every day. Many Reformers had been killed.

Luther was cheered by this verse, which assured him that he was perfectly safe until his work on earth was done (from Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* [Pilgrim Publications], 38:2).

Gratitude is a spiritual virtue that opens the door for the soul to the world around you. It creates a centrifugal force that causes the individual to look away from the self to God and to fellow human beings (Bullock, 160).

By articulating the significance of Jesus through Psalm 118, they profess that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are an extension or further fulfillment of God's saving activity in the Exodus and the return from exile.

Significance

The first dramatic public gesture, therefore, has placed the Galilean preaching (Jesus) firmly in contention for the title King of the Jews (NIGTC, 435).

The summary effect of the quotation in vv. 9-10 is thus not overtly messianic. Indeed, had the crowd intended the acclamations to refer to specific messianic fulfillment in Jesus, we should be surprised that Jesus was not promptly arrested by Roman authorities (PNTC, 337).

Mark's account is noteworthy for what does not happen. The whole scene comes to nothing, and the crowd disperses as mysteriously as it assembled. Mark is warning against mistaking enthusiasm for faith and popularity for discipleship (PNTC, 338).

Even when Jesus stands at the center of Israel's faith, he stands alone.

Illustrations