

The Promised Saviour

Gillian Pegler

Prayers by Ali Cripps

Edited by Geoff Cresswell

The Promised Saviour

© Gillian Pegler, 2021

Time For Change Ministries

www.tfcministries.org.uk



Self-Published

With thanks to RH for graphics and to LV and AC for proof-reading

All Scripture references are taken from the New International Version 2011

No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from Time For Change Ministries.

For you

The Promised Saviour: Introduction

‘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 v 44

This book has been written for you to read in the weeks before Easter, finishing a few days after Easter Sunday. Each day, you will see that the events in the gospel accounts of Jesus’ death and resurrection were prophesied (forecast) in detail, hundreds of years earlier. You’ll also find out why Jesus had to die and rise again. As I’ve written this, I’ve had people in prison specifically in mind and I pray that things will start to change in your heart and life as you learn about Jesus this Easter.

Prophecy is God speaking, by His Holy Spirit, through one person to tell other people God’s message. Some of the prophecies we will be looking at come from Jesus Himself and we will see that He accurately predicted the events surrounding His own death and resurrection.

Many Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled (seen to come true) more than once. For example, a thousand years before Jesus was born, God told King David that one of his descendants would be a king¹, not only referring to David’s own sons following him as king, but also to a descendant of David who would have an eternal kingdom. The prophecy of a coming king ultimately referred to Jesus. So some of the prophecies we’re looking at will come true twice in history (have a ‘double fulfilment’).

¹ 2 Samuel 7 v 12

Fulfilling prophecies about the events surrounding someone's last days, their death and their rising from the dead is not the sort of thing you can pull off as a trick. And we're not talking about just one detail here, we're looking at over 20 events, some of which had multiple Old Testament prophecies referring to them. It's impossible to fiddle the outcome of so many prophecies. Jesus Christ fulfilled all of these prophecies in His death and resurrection and this means we need to sit up and take notice of what was going on. That's why I've written this book.

By the time you reach Easter Sunday, you will have seen that God planned the death and resurrection of His Son, in advance, down to the finest detail and was in control of the whole thing. There must be a reason that God lets us into His plan like this. He must have wanted us to learn something from seeing all these prophecies come true. There are at least two things we can learn: firstly, that Jesus' death was no accident and, secondly, that God loves us very deeply indeed.

Enjoy!

PS If you would like to read a passage of the Bible each day, I will suggest a related passage at the end of each chapter.

4th Sunday of Lent (Mothering Sunday)

The Promised Saviour: Anointing for burial

“Leave her alone,” Jesus replied.

“It was intended that she should save this perfume
for the day of my burial.”

Jesus’ words, John 12 v 7

‘So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body,
wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock.’

Mark 15 v 46

It was the week before the Passover² festival. Not long before, Jesus’ friend, Lazarus, had been taken ill and died. Jesus didn’t arrive until after the funeral but He did an amazing thing when He got there. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead! He called him out of the tomb and Lazarus came out with his grave clothes still on him! No-one was going to forget that in a hurry! Many people put their faith in Jesus when they saw this.

The religious authorities reacted very differently. The Jewish chief priest, whose name was Caiaphas, prophesied that, ‘it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.’³ He meant that Jesus should be killed to stop people from putting their faith in Him. Caiaphas’ words resulted in a plot to kill Jesus. However, Caiaphas didn’t realise that his prophecy was exactly what God was thinking too, but for a very different reason.

² **Passover** – the most important Jewish festival. We’ll think more about this on Tuesday.

³ John 11 v 50

God's plan stretched way back into eternity. We read that God, 'chose us in him (Jesus) before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his (God's) sight.'⁴ We'll spend the rest of this book getting a better understanding of what this verse means. For now, it's enough to say that God the Father had the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, planned before He even started creation. Jesus' death was planned before we existed. Before the planets existed and before the universe existed! Jesus' death was no knee-jerk reaction from God and it was no unfortunate turn of events for a Galilean teacher.

Jesus knew He was going to die. He knew the reason that He, the Son of God, had come to planet earth to be born as a baby to a virgin from Nazareth. He knew why He, who was fully God, had to become fully human. It was because He was on a mission to save us.

In the passage we are looking at today, Jesus not only knew He was going to die, He also knew that He was going to die very soon. John chapter 12 describes a curious event, which took place in Bethany, just outside Jerusalem. It was six days before a big festival called Passover and so everyone was heading to Jerusalem. There was a hit out on Jesus. The religious authorities had given orders that anyone who knew where Jesus was should report it so that they could arrest and kill Him.⁵

Jesus was in the home of Lazarus, the man who had died and was raised to life again. Martha, Lazarus' sister, was serving dinner. Mary, his other sister, took a pint of pure nard, a very expensive and precious perfume, and poured it over Jesus' feet, wiping them with her hair. The whole house was filled with the fragrance.

⁴ Ephesians 1 v 4

⁵ John 11 v 53 & 57

This seems like a very strange thing to do! In fact one of Jesus' disciples, Judas (who would later betray Jesus), objected. He complained that the perfume was worth a whole year's wages and should instead have been sold and the money given to the poor. However, we are told that Judas' concern was not for the poor, but for himself, since he was the one who looked after the money and he had sticky fingers. Jesus' response to Judas' challenge is amazing – “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.”⁶

You see, Jesus knew that this was the last week of His life. He knew He was heading to the cross. He knew He would be betrayed by His own friends, arrested, tried, mocked, beaten and crucified. If ever there was a time for Him not to be in Jerusalem, it was now. He could have got away. But He didn't. He wanted to get to the cross, not because He wanted to suffer for suffering's sake but because He wanted to go through all that suffering for your sake and mine. He wanted to die for us, to pay for our sins, because He loves us so much.

I wonder whether the perfume that Mary poured on Jesus was so strong that it was still lingering on Him a week later as He hung on the cross? Perfume that costs a whole year's wages isn't the sort of stuff that wears off quickly, especially when showers were not a regular occurrence. Whether Jesus could still smell the perfume or not as He hung on the cross, He would have remembered this act of preparation for His burial. And He would have remembered that His death was planned before time began, before creation, before the people for whom He was now dying existed.

When they buried Jesus, they wrapped His body, with spices, in strips of linen. We are told that Nicodemus, a follower of Jesus, brought 35kg of myrrh

⁶ John 12 v 7

and aloe to do this.⁷ Do you remember the three gifts that the wise men brought to the infant Jesus? One of them was myrrh. That gift was itself a prophecy of the suffering and death that would come to the adult Jesus.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to live on earth as a human being, knowing that this was all leading up to a very dark day when He would die in our place. And He did it because He loves us.

⁷ John 19 v 39

Prayer

Dear God, help me to see the truth of Jesus as I read this book. Help me to see just how incredibly important His death was – and what it means for me today. Thank you, God, for Jesus being obedient to you even when it meant that He had to face death – and all because He loves me so much. Amen.

Further reading: John 12 v 1-11