**“Breathed His Last”**

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Zechariah 9:9-12

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 14:1—15:47

Palm Sunday

“Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

THE ANALOGIES

Many **analogies** assist us in **understanding** and **embracing** the events of the **holiest week in history**. **Called “Israel”**, God’s collective people **are** those who (as the name means) “**contend with God**”, so we’re here and must (together and each in our minds and hearts) “**wrestle**” with what happened 2,000 years ago … and have it all “**wrestle**” **with us**. What happened from Palm Sunday onward cannot be **avoided by anyone who would call themself a Christian**. Like the one God name-changed to “Israel”, fathering then all who’d **likewise** be **called “Children of Israel”** (and that’s all of us gathered here I know by the covenant of Baptism and a faith, or seriousness, about what that means), **this week is what and “Who” we need to be in physical conflicted energy with**, “wrestling / contending / wrangling” and being “wrestled upon / contended with” by God who lets us have that kind of physical wrangling with Him … actually **insists upon it**.

Jesus’ mother, **Mary**, **represents that group of us** as the “**Woman**” (from Genesis 3) who that covenant with a whole nation (“Israel”) because of the “**Seed**” of God’s sacrificial Son carried within it led to, **she shows us who we are and how we must act** as **she’s, herself**, “**wrangling** / **wrestling** / **contending**” **with every moment of every day of this Passion doled out upon the One born to her** (if you’ve not watched Mel Gibson’s “Passion of the Christ” from the perspective of her eyes, do so and understand / embrace what she MUST SEE and how she MUST SEE IT because that’s the guide to how every follower should and MUST or else miss most of the point).

And, then, Jesus gave us the **Serpent lifted up in the wilderness**, the very **essence of “death”** in the serpent bites that would kill and **He** would have to be **lifted up and killed**, **becoming death itself** and **FEELING IT BEYOND WHAT WE EVER WOULD HAVE TO**, so **save us from the** **WORST OF IT, WHICH HE WAS NOT SAVED FROM**, the **physicality** yet **SO MUCH THE MORE IN THE HELL OF BEING FORESAKEN WITH THAT BECAUSE HE DIED WITH EVERY SIN OF ALL TIME AND PERSON AND WRONGLY ACCUSED OF IT YET PUNISHED FOR IT ALL ANYWAY**.

And **palms**, or **plants**, which **celebrate then kill** as our leaf green and fragrant becomes dried and contorted into the shape of a plant cut from what was a tree to form a vertical stanchion and a crossbar stretching out the Son of God nailed, bloodied beyond almost recognition, flesh torn away from muscle and bone by whips, in shock and exhausted, nearly dead before ever being nailed to this dead wood, and **hung there for the hours it took to crush His heart from its beating and constrict His lungs from their ability to work**.

THE REALITY

The Gospel writer, Mark, is straight to the point. Beyond analogies is the reality of the events, each a narrative of a paragraph only (maybe two), concise and to the point, “just the facts” as all must, then, with the help of the Holy Spirit to interpret it through Words of Promise and Gospel because of it, know it as “**OUR FAULT BUT TO OUR BENEFIT (AND FOREVER)**”.

I picked but **one short sentence** for all of our **TAKEAWAY**. I pray that this one sentence **opens-up all the significance that the analogies help with**, but we have to **have** one visual in our mind’s eye / we have to **have** one thing to hang onto as we “wrestle” with our upcoming week. “Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last.” …..

The American Medical Association has examined the evidence of the account of the Passion of Christ. Blood loss even through its leakage with sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane before all the human infliction even began set into motion “**shock**” and (with it) a lot of other **shutting down of body functions**. **Whipped then to as near death as you could be while still kept alive to be crucified**, Jesus then had the **nails** and the **hanging from them** in a posture designed for ultimate discomfort. Nerves pierced and pulled-upon by body weight and exposure was every moment of hours of trying to catch one small breath, lifting or pushing up to not, so much, inhale shallowly but exhale which was almost impossible. “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” and a “loud cry” part of His last flex, **Jesus (“through Whom all things were created”) “breathed His last”**.

Friday, by sundown, the breathless body of Jesus lay in a grave. It was **necessary that One (worthy) die for the sins of many** and Martin Luther says that “**we** **are sinners and thieves**, and therefore **we** **are worthy of death and eternal damnation**. But **Christ took all our sins** **upon Himself**, and **FOR THEM** **He died on the cross**”.

**Forgive us, Father, for the sake of +Jesus**. In His name. Amen.