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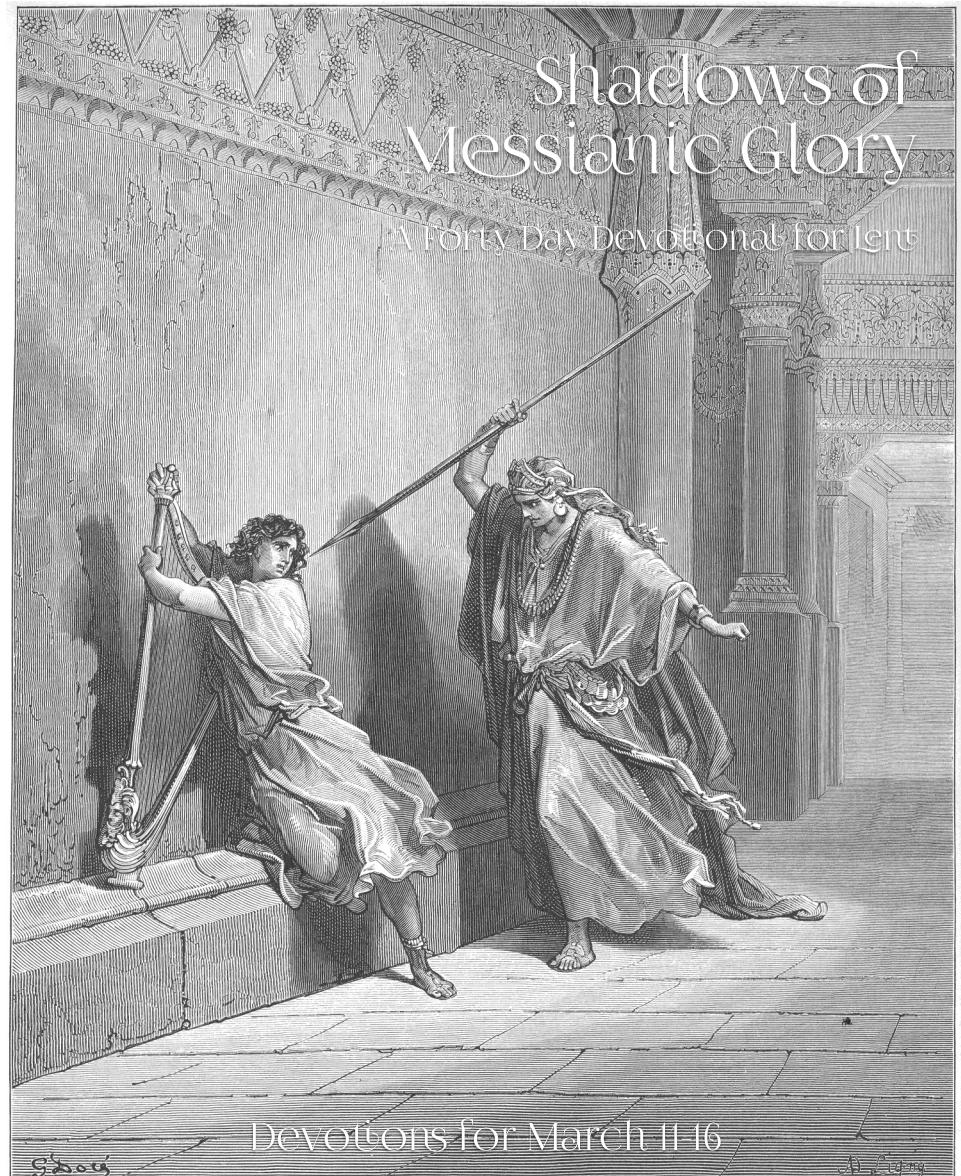
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Devotions for March 11-16

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

Genesis 49:10

Genesis 49:10

Psalm 2:7

Psalm 22:1

Leviticus 16:10

Genesis 4:25

Isaiah 53:12

March 11

Genesis 49:10

Timeline

written 1400
years before
Christ

Prophet
Jacob

Fulfillment

Matthew
28:18-20

Revelation 5:5

Prayer
Heavenly Father,
thank You for
promising Your
Son and keeping
Your promises
that I might be
saved in Him.
Amen.

The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Maybe you heard this from your parents: "I can't promise you anything." Maybe you were asking too much; maybe your parents wanted to give you what you wanted, but they simply couldn't afford it.

Jacob blesses his sons as he knows that he is soon to die. Of Judah he says that the scepter shall not depart from his house. In his blessing he did not say, "Maybe." Jacob's words are a prophecy, and God is going to fulfill them. Therefore, he can confidently say this.

The prophet Micah added something of more significance to this blessing. From the house of Judah a future ruler would come "from of old" (Mic. 5:2). Somehow the One to come after David and Judah would have also come from before David and Judah. This is an amazing glimpse at God's plan. God the Father would send His Son, and that Son Jesus would be born in human flesh, but also be from of old.

We can make promises, but we're so used to breaking them. Either by forgetfulness, sinful duplicity, or our own frailty, we've been known to be unable to fulfill the promises we make, but God actually did fulfill the promise to send forth His Son, Jesus Christ, that we might be saved from sin and death. He is more than just an earthly king, sitting on an earthly throne. He takes his seat on a heavenly throne where He shall reign over all peoples, forever and ever.

I can promise you this: if you believe in Jesus Christ, if your faith is in Him, you will be saved as a free gift, and have eternal life. It's true, because it is God who has actually promised it.

By Rev. Chris Truelson

He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

"I'm with Stupid." Do you remember this slogan that was once popular on t-shirts? The phrase was usually accompanied by an arrow, printed underneath it, pointing to another person standing beside the one wearing the shirt. Needless to say, if you're walking with a person wearing that shirt, you don't want to be on the side with the arrow pointing at you.

Luke tells us, "Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with [Jesus] to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left" (Luke 23:32-33). On one side was a criminal who could only hurl insults at Him. On the other side, however, was a penitent offender who asked, "'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom'" (Luke 23:42). The mocking malefactor would have happily worn one of these t-shirts as he hung beside Jesus. On the other hand, Jesus wasn't ashamed to wear our sin and shame and declare, "I'm with Sinners."

Jesus did this in love for you and for me. In Isaiah we hear, "He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 5:12). Jesus has given something much better to wear than a t-shirt. Through faith, and in our Baptism, you and I now wear the righteousness of Christ. As Paul reminds us, "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:27). You and I are blessed to have a Savior who loves us and has taken away our sins. We have a Savior who is gracious to declare that He's with us.

By Rev. David Tannahill

March 16

Isaiah 53:12

Timeline

700 years before
Christ

Prophet
Isaiah

Fulfillment

Luke 15:1-2
Luke 23:32-33

Prayer
Precious Savior,
thank You for
wearing my sins
that I may wear
Your righteousness.
Thank You
for being num-
bered with me.
Amen.

Marc h 15

Genesis 4:25

Timeline
written 1400
years before
Christ

Prophet
Eve

Fulfilment
Romans 9:7-8
Hebrews 5:5

Prayer
Lord Jesus, thank You for coming as the salvation to a sinful and undeserving humanity. Be with us, comfort us, give us Your grace, mercy, and salvation. Amen.

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him."

Eve says a weird thing at the beginning of Genesis 4. She says when she bears Cain, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." Numerous commentators think that she believed she had given birth to the one who would relieve Adam and Eve of the consequences for their sins.

Cain is the first person ever to be born instead of created. Eve thought he was the savior promised by God. Instead, Cain would be the first murderer. Imagine what the first couple suffered, exiled from the Garden of Eden, suffering not only with the murder of their righteous second son, Abel, but also the complete ostracization of their murderous first son, Cain. It seemed like hope was cut off.

But now in their third son, Seth, there is a new line, a new hope. His name means "appointed." This son was appointed to be the line of promise. We can follow that line throughout history to righteous Noah, to Father Abraham, to the tribe of Judah, to King David, on down to Jesus, the Savior. Seth's line was the appointed line of salvation.

You come from this line too. How do we know this? It is the only possibility, because every line of humanity traces itself back to our forefather, Noah. From there the tree branches out, and from it, the most important branch is Jesus. In that way, humanity is a lot tighter than you ever thought. God promised that He would send salvation for all the descendants of Adam and Eve, for the appointed line of the Messiah, the line of Seth, and for you.

By Rev. Chris Truelson

I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

When our governments issue decrees, they are often received as very bad news. Think of the last time a congress or parliament presented a bill or an order that was met with universal acclaim. Acts passed by human rulers are almost always met with opposition. The Lord's decrees are likewise met by a sinful human race with the same ambivalence. To some, God's decrees are worthy of eternal praise (Ps. 119:164). To others, they are hateful and worthy of derision (see Richard Dawkins or any other of the vocal New Atheists).

The composer of Psalm 2 states a bold decree, that he is no mere servant of God but a Son, begotten of the Lord Himself. What human would be so bold as to proclaim himself the Son of the great I Am? No doubt this was a decree met with ambivalence, at best, and outright opposition at worst. Would the Lord truly make such a decree?

Jesus was met with intense opposition when He applied this same language to Himself. "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him... He was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). But if the Psalmist could say it, for whom it was only true prophetically, why not Jesus, for whom it was true by nature? Jesus was accused of blasphemy for "being a man, mak[ing] yourself God" (John 10:34-36). But He did not make Himself God: He was begotten, for so the Lord decreed.

By extension, in our Baptisms, we too can claim that this decree applies to us. We dare to say we are God's daughters and sons, because He has decreed it to be so. For some, this decree of salvation in Jesus is bad news. But for us it is the best news possible.

By Rev. Charles St-Onge

Marc h 12

Psalm 2:7

Timeline
1000 years before
Christ

Prophet
David

Fulfilment
Acts 13:32-33
Hebrews 1:3-5

Prayer
Lord God, help us always to receive with joy Your decrees concerning Your Son and our salvation. Amen.

Marc h 13

Psalm 22:1

Timeline
1000 years before
Christ

Prophet
David

Fulfillment
Matthew 27:46
Mark 15:34

Prayer
As I await the
dawn of Your re-
turn, O Lord,
may my heart
never doubt Your
might, nor count
itself forsaken.
Amen. (LSB
607:4)

My God, my God, why have you
forsaken me?

In W. David Wood's book *How Apollo Flew to the Moon*, commander Pete Conrad of the Apollo 12 mission looked out over the cold lunar surface and exclaimed, "That's a God-forsaken place." Command Module Pilot Richard Gordon added, "It's good to be here."

It was a dark day outside of Jerusalem when Jesus cried out on the cross. The crowds below were watching the Son of God suffering on the cross. It's an image for us that's hard to bear. Golgotha truly was a God-forsaken place. When Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He was quoting David in Psalm 22. David felt forsaken. The Apollo astronauts felt they had arrived at a God-forsaken place. At Calvary, in our place, Jesus truly was forsaken by God.

Jesus took the stench, shame and guilt for all our sins and the sins of the world upon Himself. In this moment, the Father turned His back and rained down upon His Son the full punishment for your sins and mine and for the sins of the world.

God did this so that you and I will never know, or ever experience, being abandoned by God. You and I, and all who trust in Jesus for forgiveness, will never be forsaken. How soothing it is, even in death, to hear God's assurance, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Heb. 13:5).

It's good for us to be here, and to stand at the foot of the cross again this Lent and hear these words. No matter where we are, or under what circumstances we find ourselves today or tomorrow, we shall never be abandoned by God. What Jesus did for us on Calvary assures us that we will never be forsaken.

By Rev. David Tannahill

The goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as a scapegoat into the wilderness.

"Scapegoat" is a strange word. We know what a scapegoat is—a person who takes the blame for something someone else did. But what does this have to do with goats?

Our English word "scapegoat" comes from the King James translation of the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. Some English Bibles leave the Hebrew word untranslated. This word is "azazel." The exact meaning is unclear, but it probably means something like "absolute removal."

Regardless, we know what a scapegoat was for. Two goats were to be offered for the people's sins. One goat was slaughtered. The other was left alive, and the priest was to confess the sins of the people over this goat. This goat was then led out to the wilderness, never to be seen again. Neither the goat nor the sins it carried would come back.

While we are not bound by this command, the words still have meaning. We do not have a goat, but we have the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus suffered in our place for our sins. Our sins are taken away, never to be seen again! In the Old Testament the scapegoat merely carried the people's sins out to the wilderness. But our sins have been taken away completely.

Sometimes we forget this. Guilt follows us. Or we repeat the same sins over and over again, as though they stick to us forever.

But the scapegoat reminds us of what Jesus has done for us. Our guilt is gone, forever. We do not need to commit the same sins over and over again. Jesus, our scapegoat, has carried our sins away, and they will not return.

By Rev. Jonathan Mueller

Marc h 14

Leviticus
16:10

Timeline
1400 years before
Christ

Prophet
Moses

Fulfillment
2 Corinthians
5:21

Prayer
Holy Lord, in the
Old Testament
You instituted
sacrifices to point
to Your Son's ult-
imate sacrifice.

We give You
thanks for taking
away our sins by
the Lamb You
provided. Help us
to remember that
our sins are taken
far from us, and
to live accord-
ingly. We pray this
in Jesus name.
Amen.