

PALM SUNDAY 2016
JESUS: THE KING WHO WAS A LAMB
John 12:12–19

¹²The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

The Feast is Passover (12:1). Passover was a commemoration and celebration of how God delivered His people, Israel, from **slavery** and **bondage** and **death** in Egypt. We looked at that in our study of **Exodus 1-12**. And if you'll recall that story, God sent a succession of **nine plagues** upon the Egyptians, punishing them and bringing judgment upon them for the way that they treated God's people — and ultimately judgment upon them because they had de-godded God with their pantheon of pagan deities.

In the **tenth** and final and most devastating plague upon Egypt, the True and living God sent the angel of death throughout the land killing every firstborn male child. But Yahweh commanded His people to take a lamb, without spot or blemish, kill it, take the blood of that innocent sacrifice and essentially paint the doorpost of the entryway to each of their homes. When the angel of death passed through the land, he would see the blood of the spotless lamb and PASSOVER that home. In a very real way each household was spared because they TRUSTED what God had to say about the blood of the lamb that was slain! They were spared because they had a relationship with God based upon faith. It didn't matter if you were a descendant of Abraham. It didn't matter if you were circumcised. You had to exercise personal faith in God, demonstrated by obedience. You didn't have to understand HOW the blood of that lamb saved you. You didn't need to know WHY any old animal wouldn't do, or why it had to be without spot or blemish. But you did have to trust and obey, or else your first born male child would die. The angle of death passed through the land and Pharaoh finally relented and released the Israelites from bondage and death.

The feast of Passover was a celebration of that event. It was a memorial to how God literally passed over his children and spared them death and delivered them from slavery and bondage in Egypt. Jews would come from around the world to celebrate Passover.

It's impossible for us to grasp what the city of Jerusalem and its surrounding areas looked like at Passover in the day of Jesus.

QUOTE: ELLICOTT — *We are not left without some data of the actual amount of the gathered numbers, as we have a calculation of Josephus based upon the number of lambs sacrificed (256,500), according to which it would appear that even at the very low estimate of 10 persons to each lamb the number of people assembled must have been just under 2.7 million without taking into consideration those that were present but incapacitated by legal impurities from being partakers in the sacrifice.*

Try to imagine **three times** the population of Sacramento in and around what

we call today the "Old City" of Jerusalem. It would be a mass of humanity everywhere you turned! Virtually every inch of open ground near and on the sides of the Mount of Olives was probably covered with the tents and make shift camps. No porta-potties, no place to bathe for a week. Talk about an all out assault on your senses. By the way — The size of sheer numbers in attendance at the feast is why Pontius Pilate was in Jerusalem. His residence was in Caesarea Maritima. He came up to Jerusalem during the major feasts of Israel because of the potential for revolt against Rome.

¹²The next day — The day after the dinner at the house of Simon the Leper; Sunday before Passover. Some 700 years before **John 12** — the prophet **Daniel** predicted in the most specific and most remarkable way not only that Christ the Messiah would come — but the very day He would come. Daniel predicted WHEN Jesus would come (**Daniel 9**). Zechariah predicted HOW Jesus would come (**Zech. 9**). The Psalms (118) predicted WHAT the people would say when Jesus came.

Sir Robert Anderson wrote a book entitled, *The Coming Prince*. He was Assistant Commissioner of Metropolitan Police and Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard in 1888. In his book he gives to us the remarkable details concerning the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. In **Daniel 9** God declares that from *the time the commandment was given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah would be 69 periods of 7 years*. From his research he discovered that the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes on **March 14, 445 BC**. Based upon the 360 day Babylonian calendar year, 69 seven year periods (on a 360 day Babylonian calendar year) = **173,880 days**. If you start at **March 14, 445 BC** and go forward 173,880 days you come to **April 6** — the Sunday before Passover in **32 AD**.

¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" ¹⁴And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ¹⁵"Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

Here's how Matthew records it.

***Matthew 21:8-11** Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."*

Jesus is a KING LIKE NO OTHER. Jesus is *THE KING WHO WAS A LAMB!*

This procession was a SPECTACLE. Bethany is on the East facing side of the Mount of Olives. It faces the Jordan River. It faces what is now Palestinian territory and the Arab states is on the Eastern face of the Mount of Olives. You can't see Jerusalem until you crested the Mount of Olives. When you crest the Mount of Olives you see stretched out before you the city of Jerusalem. It is

even today — one of the most glorious vantage points in the whole world. But in the day of Jesus — It was absolutely magnificent! When this crowd crested the Mount of Olives they would have seen the Temple Mount, the East Gate and the magnificent Temple that was built by Herod.

QUOTE: Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* — *Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes, for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow; for, as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceeding white.*

The works of Josephus : Complete and unabridged (Wars 5.221-224). Peabody: Hendrickson.

There is something about the physical environment in Israel that seems to enable sound to travel great distances. The theatre in Beth-Shean can hold thousands of people. Yet you can sit on the edge of the stage and speak to the stands without amplification. On top of the Herodian, outside of Bethlehem, you can hear the conversations of children 1 mile away!

With this incredible natural amplification of sound, when they crested the Mount of Olives, the shouts of this crowd would be heard in the city of Jerusalem. **At the upper end of the Temple Mount** was the **Antonia Fortress** where the Roman troops were garrisoned, and where Pontius Pilate held court while in Jerusalem at the feasts because they were times that were ripe for rebellion against the Roman presence in Israel.

When this shout went up from the Mount of Olives the Roman soldiers positioned on the walls of the Antonia fortress would have looked up to see what was going on — and no doubt thought — *It's already starting.* **They would have seen** the disciples laying their garments in the path of Jesus and laying their palm branches before Jesus who was riding on this donkey. But they also **would have HEARD** the cries of the disciples — *"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"*

I say all of this to emphasize the point that this was a very PUBLIC moment. And that makes it an extraordinary moment in the public ministry of Jesus. Time and again over the course of nearly three years of public ministry we see Jesus withdrawing from the multitudes. Especially when they tried to make a spectacle of Him (One time they tried to take Him by force and make Him king — but He withdrew from them!) This wasn't the first time He had gone up to Jerusalem for a feast. He never made an entrance like this one. In fact He pretty much tried to come in under the radar. And now, at the close of His public ministry Jesus is a wanted man. This is a tremendous display of courage to put Himself in such PUBLIC VIEW!

WHY choose THIS day to GO PUBLIC? As we have said time and again — everything in the ministry of Jesus was by divine design. THE HOW of His entry into Jerusalem was foretold by the prophet Zechariah.

***Zechariah 9:9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

THE WHEN of His entry into Jerusalem was promised by Daniel. The Sunday

before Passover in 32AD was the very day that Daniel had prophesied concerning the Coming of the Messiah — exactly 173,880 days from March 14, 445 BC. Here's what makes it even more amazing. The Sunday before Passover in 32AD was the 10th of Nisan on the Jewish calendar. According to the Law of Moses — the Jews were to bring their lambs to the temple and **present** them to the priests **for inspection** to see if they were *without spot or blemish* — so they could slaughter them for Passover. They were supposed to do this on the 10th of Nisan!

In **1 Corinthians 5:7** the Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus was our Passover lamb sacrificed for our sin. The public ministry of Jesus began with John the Baptizer pointing to Jesus and saying

John 1:29 Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World.

Now — **on the very day** prophesied by the prophet Daniel — Jesus is **presenting Himself** not just as KING — but as **the lamb** without spot or blemish — **the lamb** inspected and scrutinized — **the lamb** to be slaughtered for the redemption of Israel and all of mankind.

Let's go back to the Exodus 12 so we can get the full picture of **WHO** Jesus is and **WHAT** He was about to do four days after He has presented Himself as the lamb to be slaughtered for our redemption; and **WHAT** that means to us today. The KEY VERSE is **verse 5** —

Exodus 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

Again — The apostle Paul said

1 Corinthians 5:7 For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

¹The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²"This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.

Something so POWERFUL, so WONDERFUL, was going to happen that they would measure time by it — they would set their calendars by it!

HERE'S THE PICTURE — Something so POWERFUL, and so WONDERFUL happens when the blood of Jesus is applied to your life – (deliverance from the power and penalty of sin) – that it brings about a NEW BEGINNING.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

I'm 59 years old – but life BEGAN for me 38 years ago at around 1:30am on December 31, 1973. The term BORN AGAIN takes on wonderful and fresh meaning in the light of **Exodus 12** and **John 12**. We should be so thankful and so extravagant in our love and adoration of our King because our King is also our Passover lamb, slaughtered for our redemption — giving to us a NEW

BEGINNING.

³Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.

We know that John 12 is taking place on the 10th day of Nisan.

Thousands of lambs were slain — yet the Lord speaks of the Passover Lamb as ONE. That is because in the mind and heart of the Father there is only ONE lamb. **Revelation 13.8 KJV** speaks of Jesus as *THE Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. John the Baptizer said — “Behold! **The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** (John 1:29).

⁴And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the

lamb. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

Notice the PROGRESSION — v.3 a lamb — v.4 the lamb — v.5 your lamb

This is a great picture of OUR perception of Jesus as the Holy Spirit progressively draw s us to Christ. FIRST we see Jesus as a lamb — pure, a special teacher — one of many great religious figures. THEN He becomes the lamb — We realize that He is MORE than just a prophet or teacher. We come to see Him as *THE Only Begotten Son of God, as THE lamb of God*. FINALLY, you make Jesus your lamb. He becomes YOUR PERSONAL Savior; YOUR Lord. I pray that each and every one of you will leave here this morning knowing Jesus as your lamb. In our Men's Study we talked about the how the Christian life is a **living relationship** with a **living savior**. We talked about the Christian life being at it's core a **living relationship** with a **person**. Jesus wants us to know and relate to him on a personal level. Remember Mary Magdalene in the Garden on the first Easter morning? She said — *Where have you taken MY Lord?* Is Jesus YOUR Lamb / YOUR Lord? He wants to be! He will be!

⁴And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take

A house might be too little for the lamb – but the lamb is NEVER too little for a household. There is more of Jesus than my home or yours can ever appreciate. There is plenty of Jesus to go around for this lost world. Invite your world into your life — your home to meet your Jesus!

⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats,

That is the peak year of a lamb. That is the point of its greatest value. Jesus was in His PRIME when He was slain!

⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

Even as THE LAMB of the first Passover was to be observed from the 10th of Nisan to 14th of Nisan — Jesus presented Himself on the 10th of Nisan and was observed and scrutinized from the 10th of Nisan until He was crucified on the 14th of Nisan

NOTICE — *the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.* This is the FIRST use in the Bible of the term *whole assembly of the congregation.* Interesting in light of what Peter said speaking to a huge crowd on the day of Pentecost —

Acts 2:23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

⁷“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

Here is an awesome PICTURE of what would happen outside of the Damascus gate at a place called Golgotha. **Exodus 12:22** tells us that they were to slay the lamb in the basin — the little ditch at the threshold of the door. They were to put the blood on the **two door posts** — the uprights. And then on **the lintel** — over the door. And in so doing you have a beautiful picture of 2 crosses with THE LAMB SLAIN in the center.

John 19:16b-18 So they took Jesus,¹⁷ and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

Mind blowing, minute details in Exodus that point to Jesus and what He would experience in a matter of days from this passage in **John 12!** Pascal, one of the greatest thinkers in the history of the world got saved at the age of 31. He devoted the next 8 years of his life (died at age of 39) to the study of the Scriptures. He said — *“I am amazed at how the Lord ingeniously detailed the work of the coming Christ, and yet obscures it to those who would not want to see it.”* How true that is He ingeniously opens understanding to us as we desire to know Him, AND He obscures the understanding of those who refuse to see.

⁸They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

HUGE — Not only slain – but eaten! This teaches us that it is NOT enough to merely acknowledge Jesus intellectually. We must APPROPRIATE Him – We must PARTAKE of His life. Jesus said this very thing back in **John 6.**

John 6.53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

With these very words Jesus essentially drove some 20 thousand people away from Himself. They left Jesus saying — *This is too hard for us!* I Read this interesting quote from someone in England the other day

I'm convinced that young people are leaving church not because we've made the Gospel too hard but because we've made it too easy.

Listen — This is where the rubber meets the road. We are to be utterly and radically Jesus centric; deriving life from Him, allowing Him to make an impact upon the INSIDE – our hearts.

roasted on the fire — It was not enough that this spotless lamb be slaughtered. It had to be ROASTED WITH FIRE. Throughout the Old Testament God spoke of His wrath using the word **fiery**. **REMEMBER** Elijah on Carmel. Fire came down from heaven and consumed Elijah's sacrifice. In only a matter of days from our text in John 12 Jesus would be slaughtered by way of crucifixion! As Jesus hung on that cross God fired down on Jesus ALL of His wrath — the wrath that WE DESERVED. The sufferings of Christ were far greater than the 6 hours of physical torture of crucifixion. In those 6 hours Jesus endured the wrath of God. In those 6 hours the eternal judgment of hell (that we deserved) was fired down upon Jesus. THAT is why Jesus cried out *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?* The wages of sin is death – separation from God. Jesus tasted death for YOU and for ME. He endured the WRATH of God in my place.

Luke 22:41-42 And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴²saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

John 18:11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

Jesus drank that cup — the cup of God's wrath (Revelation 14:10)

¹⁰And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

The Passover was NOT a drawn out process. It was an EVENT at a POINT IN TIME. All of this was pointing forward to A MOMENT in space and time when Jesus presented Himself to the nation on the 10th of Nisan to be slaughtered on the 14th of Nisan. In the same way there is A POINT in time when one confesses Christ as Savior.

¹¹In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord.

In other words — Eat it with haste because AFTER you eat it I am coming and you don't know when. Be ready to go!

HERE'S THE PICTURE — Those who have EATEN the Lamb — those who have appropriated Him as their personal savior and Lord — need to be READY TO GO! They should be living like pilgrims in this world.

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Peter 2:11 *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims,*

¹³The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

FIRST — On that night in Egypt NOTHING else would save them from the angel of death. **SECOND** — Being passed over by the angel of death had NOTHING to do with feelings and EVERYTHING to do with the blood of the lamb that was slaughtered.

I'm so GLAD that this is recorded for us, because sometimes we don't FEEL saved.

2Tim. 2.19 But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his,"

The Lord sees the Blood of Jesus — NOT your failures. The Lord sees the Blood of Jesus — NOT your good works (or lack of them). ALL that He sees is THE BLOOD OF JESUS!

I'm sure that of the 3.5 million Jews in Egypt that night, many didn't sleep a wink — and then at around midnight the screams could be heard in the land. I'm sure there were a lot of firstborn sons that were wondering if they were going to be next. It DIDN'T MATTER how they felt. IF the blood of the Passover lamb was there they were SAFE

KEY APPLICATION: If the blood of Jesus is on your life — It does NOT matter how YOU feel. NOTHING but the blood of Jesus saves! AMEN?

¹⁴"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

QUESTION: Why a memorial year after year? Because we are FORGETFUL of God's mercies.

QUOTE: SPURGEON (on Psalm 103) — *And forget not all his benefits. Not so much as one of the divine dealings should be forgotten, they are all really beneficial to us, all worthy of himself, and all subjects for praise. Memory is very treacherous about the best things; by a strange perversity, engendered by the fall, it treasures up the refuse of the past and permits priceless treasures to lie neglected, it is tenacious of grievances and holds benefits all too loosely. It needs spurring to its duty, though that duty ought to be its delight.*

The night before Jesus was slaughtered for our redemption He instituted Communion — It is a MEMORIAL service —

Do this in remembrance of me.

As often as you do eat this bread and drink this cup you do show the Lord's death until He comes.

Here is Jesus — our KING. He is THE KING WHO WAS A LAMB — our Passover lamb.

