

Ministry of Grace Church

Palm Sunday 4/2/23 – Speaker Notes

Video of Palm Sunday by the Skit Guys

Palm Sunday = beginning of “Easter Holy Week”

It commemorates an event that occurred nearly 2000 years ago, the arrival of the Messiah, the King, into the temple at Jerusalem as predicted by Zechariah:

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. (*Zechariah 9:9*)

Matthew, in his Gospel account described the triumphal entry this way:

Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And 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!" (*Matthew 21:8-9*)

Now consider this. When Jesus made His triumphal entry into the temple in Jerusalem, there was no “Easter Holy Week” because there was no Easter yet. And there was no Easter because there was no resurrection yet. And there was no resurrection because Jesus hadn’t been crucified yet.

This triumphal entry of Jesus into the temple at Jerusalem occurred during the Jewish festival called *Pasach*. We refer to it as Passover. His riding into town on a donkey was the beginning of the morphing of this Jewish celebration into the Christian celebration of Easter. In order to understand the significance of this statement, we have to go back an additional 1500 years to the land of Egypt. We studied this several weeks ago when we went over Exodus chapter 12. Here’s a rough history of what happened:

- ✓ Israel became slaves to the Egyptians
- ✓ *Yahweh* sent Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt
- ✓ Pharaoh didn’t want to lose his free slave labor, but *Yahweh* had different plans.
- ✓ *Yahweh*, through Moses and Aaron, brought a series of plagues on Egypt to persuade Pharaoh to let the people go, but he still refused.
- ✓ Finally, Moses told Pharaoh that there would be yet one more plague and then he would finally let the Israelites go.
- ✓ After Moses left Pharaoh, *Yahweh* told him, “This is your first month (Nissan). He then said:
 - On the 10th of the month select a lamb without spot or blemish
 - Examine it until the 14th
 - slaughter the lamb at twilight (between 3 and 5 O’clock) and apply the blood to the door posts & lintel of your homes
 - That night (15th of Nissan) the Passover meal is to be eaten while the death angel will kill all the firstborn of Egypt, passing over the dwellings with the blood on the door posts & lintel.

The Jewish calendar is Lunar-centric, based on the phases of the moon. Ours, on the other hand is Solar-centric, based on the position of the earth around the sun. The first day of a Jewish month is determined by observation. It is the day that the first sliver of the new moon was visible at sunset, which explains why the Jewish day starts at sunset. For the Jews in Egypt, that night and the following day would be the first of Nissan (also called Abib). At the following sunset, the second of Nissan would begin.

Now, remember - God had told Moses to select the lamb on the 10th of Nissan, examine it from the 10th to the 14th to ensure that it was spotless, and slaughter it on the 14th of Nissan (before sunset). They were then to apply the blood to the door posts and the lintel, go inside, and cook and eat the Passover lamb while the death angel passed over them on the 15th of Nissan. They were ordered not to break a single bone of the lamb.

Here's another way of looking at it.

Okay, now stick with me. This is where things get really interesting. Let's look at one of Daniel's prophecies. This is a portion of the famous 70 weeks prophecy.

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; (Daniel 9:24-25) [NKJV]

There were four decrees given by Babylonian kings while Israel was there. Of these four, only one of them was to rebuild the city. It is recorded in Nehemiah 2:5-9. This particular decree was issued in 445 BC.

Since we know Daniel's prophecy and the year of the decree, we can calculate the exact year that the Messiah would arrive and it is calculated to be the year 31 AD, the precise year that Jesus made His triumphal entry

But, wait! It gets even better.

We know from reckoning of the Jewish calendar that the particular day in 31 AD was (Drum roll please) – the 10th of Nissan!

Remember, on the original Passover, the people were to select a lamb without spot or blemish on the 10th of Nissan. Jesus was presented as the selected Passover lamb as He made the triumphal entry on the 10th of Nissan.

And they were to observe it to ensure that it was spotless. The day after the triumphal entry Jesus was asked hard questions by the religious leaders to try to trip him up:

- Examined by Chief Priests and Elders (Matthew 21:23) – Challenged His authority
- Examined by Pharisees and Herodians (Matthew 22:15, 16) – Is it lawful to pay taxes?
- Examined by Sadducees (Matthew 22:23) – Which man is the woman's husband in the resurrection? Yahweh is the God of the living, not of the dead.
- Examined by a lawyer of the Pharisees (Matthew 22:35, 36) – Which is the greatest commandment?

These particular questions were asked with the intent of causing Jesus to make a mistake that they could accuse Him of. However, none of them found anything to accuse Him with. He was without spot or blemish.

Two days later, on the 13th of Nissan, Jesus ate the Last Supper with his disciples, prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, was betrayed by Judas, and was arrested.

That night (14th Nissan), Jesus was then subjected to a trial by the religious leaders (illegal, because it was done at night). And – He was condemned because He claimed to be the Christ ([Matthew 26:57-66](#))

The next morning (still 14th Nissan) He was tried by Pilate, then by Herod, then by Pilate again. Neither one found any fault with Him.

In spite of his innocence, he was taken to Golgotha and crucified. There was darkness from Noon until 3 PM while He was bearing our sins. During this time, God the Father could not look on Him because of our sins. At the end of this time, He cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Then Jesus gave up His spirit and died.

And – although it was customary for Romans to break the legs of those who were crucified to ensure that they were dead, they did not break a bone on Jesus, thus satisfying God’s instructions regarding the Passover lamb.

He was placed in a tomb and later arose from the dead. After he arose, His blood was applied to our sins so that God could not see them.

Jesus – The perfect, sinless man was crucified as the Passover Lamb to pay for our sins and rose again from the dead to prove that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. He is alive today! He is risen!

If you believe that Jesus died for you, bearing your sins on the cross, and that he rose again from the grave, and if you have confessed your belief in these facts, then you are a Christian and you have been saved from the penalty of your sins.

If you believe this but have never confessed it to anyone, I would love to pray with you after the service.

But, that’s only part of the story. As the radio broadcaster, Paul Harvey, used to say, **“And now for the rest of the story.”**

Don’t you just love the way God creates such perfect correlation between prophesy and reality, between the Passover Lamb and our Savior? Except, you see, there’s a problem with all this. As long as temple sacrifices had been going on, the sacrificial lamb was always brought into the temple area through the Sheep Gate, which was on the North side of the temple. If Jesus was to perfectly fulfill the requirements of the Paschal Lamb for the Jews, he would have entered the city through the Sheep Gate.

However, in Ezekiel’s prophecy, chapters 43 and 44, we are told that the LORD, the God of Israel enters the city by the Eastern Gate, which today is known as the Golden Gate.

Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I

fell on my face. As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, (Ezekiel 43:1-4)

That's the gate through which Jesus entered the city on Palm Sunday. Why the Eastern Gate? Because Jesus is more than just the Paschal Lamb for the Jewish people, He is their Messiah. He is the Christ. He is the Savior of the world!

Today is Palm Sunday, when we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into the city. He was riding on a donkey and palm branches were laid in the pathway before Him. His riding on a donkey was an indication that He was a King coming in peace. Laying down palm branches in the pathway was a common expression of celebration of the return of a conquering King. And, Jesus entered the temple area through the Eastern Gate.

So, we see that Jesus' triumphal entry was not just an indication that He was the Passover Lamb, but that He was also the conquering King coming in peace!

Here's a picture of the Eastern Gate today. Do you notice anything unusual about it? It's closed off! The sultan of the Ottoman empire, by the name of Suleiman, ordered it closed off so that no false Christ could walk through. Unfortunately, he closed it off about 1500 years too late, because the Christ had already entered the temple through the Eastern Gate.

Most of us have never lived in a country with a King, or Monarch. We don't know what it's like to live under a person who has absolute rule. In the United States, we live in a republic that is a representative democracy. We've gotten used to having many freedoms that are not granted under a king: the freedom of religion, the freedom of speech, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. England is not a Kingdom either, or a Monarchy. England is a Constitutional Monarchy, meaning that the King or Queen of England does not have absolute ruling authority.

We, as Christians, however do live in a Kingdom. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior, He also became our Lord, our King. In the New Testament, the word Lord is translated from the Greek *kurios*, meaning "One who is supreme in authority or power, a master or owner."

So, just exactly how did Jesus become our Lord and Master? That happened when He purchased us. The Apostle Peter tells us that this Lamb without spot or blemish paid our ransom:

knowing that **you were ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of **a lamb without blemish or spot.** (1Peter 1:18-19)

And, the Apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the Galatians:

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **to redeem those who were under the law**, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:4-7)

The word translated "redeem" here is not the normal Greek word for "redeem." That word means "to purchase in the marketplace." However, the word translated "redeem" in the Galatians 4 passage above, means "To purchase and remove from the marketplace." It means we can never be sold again! And, again, in 1Corinthians, Paul tells us:

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for **you were bought with a price**. So glorify God in your body. (1Corinthians 6:19, 20)

You see, when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He paid the ransom that was on our heads because of sin. He purchased us with His blood. And, when we confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the ransom was applied –and– the price was paid. He owns us now, He is our Lord, He is our King.

And – on that 10th day of Nissan almost 2000 years ago, that is **our** King who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. It is **our** King to whom people shouted, “Hosanna. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” It is **our** King who was found to be innocent by both the religious and the political leaders and it is **our** King who was condemned to the cruel torture of the cross because He told the truth, saying that He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

So what?

Most Christians are accustomed to thinking of Jesus as our Savior. He is our “Get out of Hell free” card. He is our ticket into heaven. He is our father, our Papa. And most of us can hardly wait to see the golden street of heaven.

But, there’s something expected of us that we don’t often talk about.

We are expected to obey our King.

We are expected to submit our lives to our Lord.

We are expected to serve our Master.

If you were to stand before your God this very night, would you be able to say, “My Lord, my King, I have lived my life for you. I have taken the gifts you have given me and I have used them to help spread the Gospel message. I have served you in the church just as I have loved you, from the bottom of my heart.”

And, will you hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”?

If you aren’t sure, there’s still time to change. You can decide right now that you want to live the life that Jesus wants you to live. You can decide right now that you want to submit yourself to your King.

In just a minute we are going to partake of Communion as a memorial of what our Savior and King did for us. This is a good time for each one of us to take stock of where we stand and how we stand for Jesus.

Let’s Pray