

Palm Sunday – April 14th, 2019

This morning we are going to drift into a message about that first Palm Sunday while at the same time weave in a little teaching about the series we are doing on the spiritual armor of God. We will be doing the same thing next week at Easter.

Let's begin by reading **Ephesians 6:13-14, 17, "Therefore, take up the full armor of God so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist. Take on the helmet of salvation..."**

We have spoken about the importance of standing firm due to the onslaught of Satan's attacks. If you want to learn more about Satan and his origins and what he is up to then you can go on-line to our web-site and see the sermons in print there.

Starting also today, we are going live on Facebook and a video of the sermons can be found there.

This morning we are going to read some passages that tell about Jesus' ride into Jerusalem on His way to the cross but first let me share a little historical background with you.

Jesus was coming into Jerusalem at a particular time of year, the Festival of the Passover. There could have not have been any more perfect of a time for Jesus to come into Jerusalem on His way to the cross.

If you remember your Old Testament stories, you remember the last plague God brought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptian people was the Passover.

After nine other plagues had occurred without the release of the Israelite people from bondage in Egypt, God announced the tenth plague, the death of all first born children in Egypt.

This death of the first born child would include the children of the Israelites if they didn't follow God's direction in protecting themselves from God's hand of judgment. God's directions included taking an unblemished lamb, sacrificing it and placing some of its blood around the door frame of their house. This protected everyone in the home.

As you know, the angel passed over Egypt, slaying each first born child, but passing over every home that was properly covered with the Passover lamb's blood. At the end of this terrible day, Pharaoh let the Israelite people go free.

The Festival that is occurring when Jesus rides into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday was a historic, cultural celebration that remembered this great event. It was the Festival of the Passover, the night when the angel of death passed over the homes that were covered with the blood of the sacrificial lamb.

You can see why Jesus riding in on this day was so significant. He was the true Passover lamb coming take away the sins of those who would claim His blood over their sins.

Let's read about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem from three of the Gospel writers.

Luke 19:37-38, "When He (Jesus) came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.'"

Matthew 21:8-11, "Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed

were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!’

When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, ‘Who is this?’ And the crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.’”

John 12:17-18, “So the people who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.”

There are several things we can see happening on this first Palm Sunday.

In the first passage in Luke we are told there was a whole crowd of disciples. As we study scriptures we understand there were many disciples of Jesus. Not just 12 disciples who were also the apostles but many disciples, disciples being defined as those who were following Jesus from place to place as he preached, taught and did His ministry of healing and setting people free of demons.

We can also see some of the reasons all the people were stirred and excited about Jesus coming into Jerusalem. Luke says the disciples were crying out because of all the miracles they had seen Jesus do.

In John we read the people went and met Him, because they heard that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. And in Matthew they were calling Him a prophet. None of them knew Jesus as the Son of God or the Passover Lamb who came to take away the sins of the world.

So the peoples focus and the excitement that was being generated on that first Palm Sunday was more about the miracles Jesus had done than on who Jesus truly was.

- 1. The people had a curiosity but not a strong desire to know Jesus and what He was all about.**

This was similar to what Herod, the ruling King of Judea was all about when he met Jesus. Look with me.

Luke 23:8, “Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.”

Herod wanted to see Jesus do something cool and when he didn't, Herod mocked Him, dressed Him up like a king and sent Him back to Pilate.

I want to tell you this morning, the very reason Jesus was soon rejected by the very crowd that received Him that first Palm Sunday was because Jesus didn't meet their expectations. Something else had been planted in their mind concerning a Messiah and when Jesus didn't measure up, they dismissed Him and ultimately played a part in His crucifixion.

To pull this into our teaching from Ephesians we must remember that **Ephesians 6:12, “...our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”**

The battle mentioned here is not just something that we deal with today but it was just as real and probably much stronger in the days of Jesus because of what Jesus was all about, defeating Satan.

As you study the New Testament you will quickly see that most of the religious leaders of Jesus' day, the Pharisees, Sadducees and the Scribes, all dismissed who Jesus was. This group was the governing body of religion for the nation of Israel.

I believe something was behind this mass dismissal of the Son of God and it wasn't just a power struggle with the leaders and their fear of losing their jobs and their religious institutions. It was that but I bet it began as a seed of untruth implanted in their hearts that led them astray.

As Jesus was nearing Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday He looked down upon the city and wept and said the following. **Luke 19:42, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes."**

The eyes of the leaders of Israel and the eyes of the people were blinded to the truth of who Jesus was. How did this come about? How did they miss who Jesus was?

2 Corinthians 4:4, "The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

That first Palm Sunday Satan had long been behind the scenes, fanning the fans of the disbelief. He had implanted a lie in the hearts of the religious leaders. He planted the question of the origin and birth of Jesus. He had planted the seeds of what a king should look like and then he fanned the flames of pride, love of oneself and love of position to the point where they were blinded to the truth of who Jesus was. They had bought into the lie.

Satan implanted a lie that lodged into their hearts and it grew and grew until, when Jesus came, they missed it, they missed Him. They missed the salvation He was offering. They missed the miracle of being in the presence of God.

That is not true of us is it?

This morning we can give God praise because we have not missed who Jesus is when He came riding into our lives and what He came to do on the cross for us. Our eyes have been opened and we see that He is the true Passover over Lamb isn't He?

Because of this we sing His praises and we worship Him by surrendering our lives to Him.

This morning I wanted to share with you a special communion service. I wanted to do this as we go into the Holy Week and Easter. I pray it will impact your heart as much as it does mine.

It helps us to have a deeper understand of what Jesus did for us upon the cross.

Special Communion Service

Matthew 26:26

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."