

000416 AM Mark-10 Palm

# **PALM SUNDAY: GOD'S APPOINTED DAY**

Don't miss the Perfect Plan of God

## **MARK 11:1-10**

Tensions were the highest anyone had ever known. People everywhere were talking about Lazarus who was dead and now he is alive, Bartimaeus who had been a blind fixture by the roadside as predictably as the morning. And now he could see and was he ever sure how he regained his sight. And then there we the crowds who had witnessed miraculous feedings and healings . . . Well it is Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> of Nissan in AD30, Jesus Christ is leaving a small village 2 miles outside Jerusalem called Bethany.

His departure is precisely what had been predicted 1,500 years before by Moses (our Passover Lamb who had to enter on the 10th of Nissan). The way He would come was exactly stated 500 years before by Zechariah (our King riding on a colt). Both stated how He would come: as a Lamb and as a King! You see Gpd's Plan is PERFECT!

Please turn there, to the Palm Sunday Triumphal Entry of Jesus the Lamb that was to be slain at God's precise moment in time. Mark 11:1-10, and please stand with me as we read these verses.

The arrival of Jesus on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nissan in AD30 was one of the greatest moments in all of history. Jesus hit Jerusalem with pinpoint accuracy. Jesus came on the very day and hour God had appointed for His presentation to the Nation and the World as God's Passover Lamb. It was an exact fulfillment of a precise prophecy. And with divine accuracy and incredible timing, Jesus came on Palm Sunday the week before Resurrection Morning. If you will note the amazing accuracy of God's Perfect Plan for the arrival of Jesus, there are three personal applications we can make for our own lives. What are they? Let me list them now, and discuss them at the end of the message:

God's Perfect Plan means - You are not an accident (You have Divine ORIGIN)

God's Perfect Plan means - Your life is not meaningless (You have Divine PURPOSE)

God's Perfect Plan means - Your death will not come unexpectedly  
(You have Divine DESTINY)

Jesus lived thirty years of relative obscurity as a boy, a carpenter with just a glimpse at age 12 going to the Temple. Then followed those three and a half action packed years of incredible ministry. Now we are at the final week! What did Jesus want us to see in those final days? We need to weigh them because they were so important to Him that He shared them at this crucial time.

We have opened our Bibles to the start of the greatest week in the history of the universe since spoken into creation by the Creator.

- ✓ Every since God flung the endless myriads of solar furnaces into space, and whispering to each their name, creation has watched, shouting the glory of God! **But now God's Perfect Plan introduces the Lamb of God to be slain.**
- ✓ From the moment Satan rebelled and drew the third of the angelic heavenly hosts along with him into war against the Most High Creator, and the toll of death and decay echoed about the Cosmos, creation has groaned for the redemption of God. **But now God's Perfect Plan introduces the Lamb of God to be slain.**
- ✓ And on this day if the voices of countless Jews had not cried Hosanna to God in the Highest, Jesus said the rocks and the creation would have cried His praises. **But now God's Perfect Plan introduces the Lamb of God to be slain.**
- ✓ Why? Because the King of Glory, the Creator, the Redeemer and Judge was coming home to His town! **But now God's Perfect Plan introduces the Lamb of God to be slain.**

God's Perfect Plan for the day of His official<sup>1</sup> coming as Judah's promised Prince was clearly spelled out in the great prophecy of the seventy weeks, as we studied last year in Daniel 9:24-26:

"Seventy weeks (i.e., 'seventy heptads' or 'seven-year periods') are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city,... from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself:

The starting-point of the prophecy is believed by most conservative scholars to be the date of the decree of Artaxerxes permitting the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8), known from secular history

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Henry Morris, Creation Trilogy, Master Books.

to be approximately 446 BC. The seventy weeks total 490 years. The first 49-year period was occupied in rebuilding the city and completing the Old Testament Scriptures (the book of Malachi was written about 400 BC). The "seven-year" periods probably were meant to be understood as seven years of 360 days each, as this was the customary Jewish and prophetic reckoning.

A 434-year period, added to the 49 years, gave 483 years (or  $360/365 \times 483 = 476$  years) from the starting date to the coming of Messiah as Prince. This comes to about 30 AD. Christ was actually born about 4 BC, so that He was 33-1/2 years old (His probable age when He was crucified) in about 30 AD. Note, of course, that there was no year "0", so that only one year separated 1 BC and 1 AD.

Although there is some uncertainty about the exact dates involved, it is clear that the prophetic period terminated at very close to the time when Christ officially offered Himself for reception as King of Israel. Instead of being crowned, however, He was crucified, "cut off, but not for Himself."

John tells us (John 12:1-3) that Jesus came to his favorite home (Mary, Martha and Lazarus) six days before Passover; this would have been Friday night. So Christ had walked from Jericho with Bartimaeus to Bethany on Friday morning. So on Friday night to Saturday night (the Sabbath) He rests with them and Mary anoints His feet with precious ointment.

On Sunday morning (John 12:9-10) a crowd comes to see Him and Lazarus He raised last week from the dead. And then later that same crowd leads Him into Jerusalem (John 12:12) in what we call the Triumphal "Palm Sunday" entry.

In both AD 30 and 33 the 10th of Nissan was the Monday of Passover week. Moses had commanded (Ex. 12:2-6) that a lamb be selected on the 10th, kept to the 14th and then sacrificed.

If this is the schedule Jesus followed, that would make the entry into Jerusalem by Christ to be the same day the Passover lamb was to enter their homes and stay with them until it was killed for each family's Passover feast. Thus intriguingly, Jesus entered into the home and heart of His people "Jerusalem" as their Passover lamb to be slain on their behalf. His crucifixion on Friday would result in a perfect fulfillment of being the Passover lamb because that was when they also were killing their lambs. He may have been crucified as the blood

of thousands of lambs was pouring down the temple sacrificial areas and streaming down into the Kidron valley!

Only four events before Christ's Death find their way into all four Gospels: the start of Christ's ministry; the feeding of the 5,000; Palm Sunday, and Maundy Thursday. This is significant. John said Jesus did enough to fill all the books of the world. Why did God limit the record? We should also pay close attention to these "Special Four"!

Jesus came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the 10th of Nissan, which was the 1st day of Passover week. Moses had commanded in Ex. 12:2-6, that each family should select a lamb on the 10th, keep the lamb in their home until the 14th and then sacrifice that lamb as their Passover Lamb. Christ's departure from Bethany and into Jerusalem's Eastern Gate is precisely what had been predicted 1,500 years before by Moses (our Passover Lamb who had to enter on the 10th of Nissan).

This Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem by Christ was on the same day the Passover lamb was to enter the homes of each family and stay with them until it was killed for each family's Passover feast. Thus intriguingly, Jesus entered into the home and heart of His people "Jerusalem" as their Passover lamb to be slain on their behalf.

His crucifixion on Friday would result in a perfect fulfillment of being the Passover lamb because that was when they also were killing their lambs.

Why? Because the King of Glory, the Creator, the Redeemer and Judge was coming home to His town! Mark 11:1-11 gives the traditional account of what we call today, Palm Sunday. To best understand this day, and to most respond to what Jesus calls us to do . . . we need to look at the events of this passage and organize our thoughts around seven truths: the day, the donkey, the disciples, the display, the dirge and the desolation. First in Mark 11: 1 the day.

First, **THE DAY** (Mark 11:1-7) What day is this in the life of Christ? John 12 tells us it was six days before the Passover that Jesus went to Lazarus, Mary and Martha's home in Bethany on Friday and Saturday. Then the next day He marches triumphantly into Jerusalem on Sunday.

This was a promised day. It was part of that irresistible countdown to the cross. What do I mean? Remember Daniel 9:24 " Seventy weeks

**are determined"**. Exactly 483 years later Jesus rides into Jerusalem on the 14th of Nissan AD30. But it is so sad to see what the people of Israel missed that day. Jesus rode in meek and mild and sitting on a donkey on the very same day the people were to select their Passover lamb and take it into their homes as Ex. 12 instructed them.

Here is Christ paraded into the Eastern Gate of the Temple as the Lamb of God. On that day 260,000 lambs would be selected and purchased and taken home. Following the 1,476-year-old tradition of Passover the countdown to the cross ticks on. It was the day of the Lamb of God. He may have been crucified as the blood of thousands of lambs was pouring down the temple sacrificial areas and streaming down into the Kidron valley! What magnificent timing! He was Jerusalem's Lamb arriving on God's perfect Day! Don't miss the Perfect Plan of God.

2<sup>nd</sup> Next, **THE DISCIPLES** (11:2-6) went to prepare the Upper Room. Historian Josephus of the 1st century tells us that at that time 256,000 lambs were sacrificed for the number of pilgrims in Jerusalem. Because the Bible instructed one lamb per family and up to ten could partake. There must have been as many as two and a half million people in Jerusalem that week! They overflowed the walls, spilling out the gates, lining the hillsides with tents. There was no room in the jammed city. Just as at His birth there was no room! Through this crowd streaming into Jerusalem, the disciples entered a village and found everything exactly as Christ said. Remember His omniscience encompasses every detail of our lives! Let Him have your way, your plans, your future, your life! Don't miss the Perfect Plan of God.

3<sup>rd</sup> Next, **THE DONKEY** (11:7-8) waited. Remember, God had planned the way He would come, it was exactly stated 500 years before by Zechariah (our King riding on a colt). Both stated how He would come: as a Lamb and as a King!

Look at Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He [is] just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. (NKJV)

Imagine all the donkeys among two and a half million people in Jerusalem that week! They overflowed the roads, spilling out the gates, lining the hillsides. Through such pandemonium, the disciples entered a village and found a colt tied and quietly waiting exactly as

Christ said. Remember His omniscience encompasses every detail of our lives!

Your Shiloh, your King, your Redeemer is going to come riding on a donkey. And He did and they missed it! He was such a contrast to other kings who marched to town with swords held high, cruelty filling their eyes, captives trudging in their wake. No the King of Kings comes quietly on a humble donkey. Don't miss the Perfect Plan of God.

4<sup>th</sup> Next, **THE DISPLAY** (11:6-10) of the crowds, they worshiped Him with coats, branches, shouting of Hosannas. It sounds so grand, it was but not to the Romans. After all the Romans were experts at parades and official public events. They called this event "the Triumphal Entry," but no Roman would have used that term.

An official "Roman Triumph" was indeed something to behold. When a Roman general came back to Rome after a complete conquest of an enemy, he was welcomed home with an elaborate official parade. In the parade he would exhibit his trophies of war and the illustrious prisoners he had captured. The victorious general rode in a golden chariot, priests burned incense in his honor, and the people shouted his name and praised him. The procession ended at the arena where the people were entertained by watching the captives fight with the wild beasts. That was a "Roman Triumph." Our Lord's "triumphal entry" was nothing like that, but it was a triumph just the same. He was God's anointed King and Savior, but this conquest would be spiritual and not military. A Roman general had to kill at least 5,000 enemy soldiers to merit a triumph; but in a few weeks the "gospel" would "conquer" some 5,000 Jews and transform their lives (Acts 4:4). Christ's "triumph" would be the victory of love over hatred, truth over error, and life over death<sup>2</sup>.

The tombs of the Egyptians, Babylonians and Assyrians with the Romans show scenes of triumph with chariots crushing their foes! But He comes quietly and will be praised even if overlooked! Don't miss the Perfect Plan of God.

Fifthly, **THE DEPTHS** of His Sorrow (Luke 19:41) He wept. Suddenly over the excited chants of the throng Christ stops, as the city came into view a loud lament throbs from Christ as He weeps over the city. What did He weep over? The same as He does today!

- ✓ The Shallowness of their commitment
- ✓ The Blindness of their Spiritual Devotion

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<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe,

- ✓ Their lost opportunities. Don't miss the Perfect Plan of God.

Sixthly, **THE DIRGE** (Luke 19:42) He Warned because Jesus<sup>3</sup> saw in the vision the camp of the enemy, a bank cast up round about with palisades and a rampart hugging the city closer and closer in deadly embrace. The curtain falls for a moment, and then rises again on another scene. The city is razed to the ground, not a stone is left upon another, the gory bodies of her children are scattered among the ruins. The silence and desolation of death reign supreme. The fact that this picture was literally fulfilled just three decades later, when the tenth Roman legion encamped just where Jesus was standing when He uttered these memorable words, would be sufficient evidence in itself, apart from any other, to substantiate the Messiahship of the one who uttered the prophecy.

When Jesus broke out into the wailing dirge of funeral-like lamentation, the voice of the multitude was hushed into silence. The ecstatic vision of the Messianic Kingdom, which had inspired the souls of these pilgrim multitudes as they sang the praises of the Messianic King and had led them to the most extravagant expressions of a fealty, vanished before the dirge-like lamentation of Jesus like a fog before the morning sun. They began now to recognize that their hopes and fond illusions were vain and were not shared by Him whom they boldly acclaimed King. He, from the hill, saw the splendor of the beloved city fade in the twilight and the shadows of irreparable moral disaster darken into deepest night. He had offered Himself as the King of Peace, sitting on the before-unridden colt of an donkey, as Zechariah had said the Messiah would come.' Don't miss the Perfect Plan of God.

Finally, **THE DESOLATION** (Luke 19:43-44). You see Palm Sunday's Hosannas faded quickly away. Christ went to the cross and Jerusalem was desolate 40 years later. Of the final destruction<sup>4</sup>, Josephus says:

Caesar ordered the whole city and the temple to be razed to the ground, leaving only the loftiest of the towers, Phase 1, Hippicus, and Mariamne, and the portion of the wall enclosing the city on the west; the latter as an encampment for the garrison that was to remain, and the towers to indicate to posterity the nature of the city and of the strong defenses which had not yet yielded to Roman prowess. All the rest of the wall encompassing the city was so completely leveled to the ground as to leave future visitors to the spot no ground for believing

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<sup>3</sup> Shepherd quoted in Pentecost, Words and Works.

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, Mark 11

that it had ever been inhabited. Such was the end to which the frenzy of revolutionaries brought Jerusalem, that splendid city of world-wide renown.

Jesus saw all this in prospect and wailed in grief. This was the heart of a new kind of king. Jesus' sorrow indicated his humanity, but it was also a revelation of the heart of God. Fix this in your thoughts. This is how Jesus Christ and God the Father and the blessed Holy Spirit sorrow over hearts that miss their "day" and "what would bring . . . peace"-namely, repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As your life stands right now, what does Jesus Christ see in your future? Judgment? Your towers pulled down? Desolation?

The Son of God in tears,  
The wondering angels see.  
Be thou astonished, O my soul,  
He shed those tears for thee.

Don't miss the Perfect Plan of God.

Palm Sunday shows the Majesty of God's Plan and the tragedy of man's choices. The tears of Christ measure the infinite value of your soul. Christ wept and lamented over Jerusalem, as he always weeps over the souls of the unrepentant.

This is our King. Let us worship him with all that we have! How, by choosing this very day and moment to acknowledge His plan and yield to Him! And to all who come to Jesus, God graciously gives them a new heart and comes to dwell in them. Then you have the entire scope of life resolved. What is that?

God's Perfect Plan means - You are not an accident (You have Divine ORIGIN). Say that with me, "I am not an accident, I have a Divine Origin!

God's Perfect Plan means - Your life is not meaningless (You have Divine PURPOSE). Say that with me, "My life is not meaningless, I have a Divine Purpose!

God's Perfect Plan means - Your death will not come unexpectedly (You have Divine DESTINY). Say that with me, "I am not going to die unexpectedly, I have a Divine Destiny!