

SPECIAL EASTER REFLECTION



If you listen closely, you can hear the people, the distant roar of the crowd.

"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

Hosanna—*please, save us.*

If you look closely, you can see them in their festive garb, their brightly colored clothes.

They are here in the city of Jerusalem, gathered for the Passover feast a few days away from now. They have heard about the signs he has done, the miracles he has performed.

Who is this Jesus of Nazareth that claims to be the Messiah, the very Son of God?

The sun hangs high. The people press closely together. The smell of donkeys wafts by, the acrid smell of sweat and excitement crushing in on you as travelers shake the dust from their feet. You fight to get close, to see what the fuss is all about.

People are breaking down branches from palm trees. They pass them to each other as they go out to greet him: their king, who sits on a donkey and her colt. You take one, and you follow them. You mimic them, as they lay their garments and fronds of palm down on the street. A triumphant entry and arrival, if ever there was one.

"Hosanna!" Please, save us.

"Hosanna to the Son of David!" The Anointed One, the Son of David who was promised to save us. Hear our cry!

"Hosanna!" You hear yourself shout. "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Hosanna in the highest!"

SERMON SUMMARY



Flash forward to present day, and still there are people asking the age-old question. Who was Jesus of Nazareth? Did he even exist? Who did he claim to be? Is it true that he was—is the true Son of God? Or was he simply a lunatic, or a liar—or Lord?

In John's letter, he writes to dispel the rumors swirling around his audience in their context. He writes to tell them, just as C.S. Lewis did for his generation in *Mere Christianity*, that Jesus was no mere man. He was not simply a great human teacher. He was the Son of God, testified to by God's acknowledgement of Him at his baptism (the water) (1 Jn. 5:6a; Matt. 3:13-17); witnessed to by His disciples and all those who saw His death and His resurrection (the blood) (1 Jn. 5:6a); and lastly, by the Spirit of God, who now lives in all of us who believe, because the Spirit is the truth (v. 6b). "The Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree." (v.8)

The second question we must ask ourselves, as we think about the crowd on Palm Sunday—now that we have some inkling of who Jesus truly is, do we truly understand what He has done for us, and why He needed to do that? Or are we, like the Israelite crowd before us, pressing our own agendas on His finished death and resurrection when He had an urgent and unique mission to complete?

In other words, why did Jesus have to die?

QUESTION ONE



QUESTION ONE:

1. Newton's third law states that for every action (force) in nature there is an equal and opposite reaction. In the beginning, in the garden, mankind chose to reject God's wisdom. They chose not to trust in Him. Instead, they exalted themselves and sought their own glory by eating of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The consequence of their actions was that sin entered into this world.

How often do we think about our own sin? How often do we allow ourselves to face the natural consequence of who we were before Christ, which is sinners who were dead in our sins to Him?

QUESTION TWO



QUESTION TWO:

2. Jesus, being the Son of God, was the only one who could pay the price of death that our sin demanded. The consequence of man's actions in the garden was the introduction of sin. Sin itself demanded payment for when man would sin, and that payment was death.

Because God so loved us, He desired to reconcile with us. He set up the system of atonement and sacrifices in the temple, but knowing that that was not enough, He sent Jesus, the Word made flesh (Jn. 1:1), to be with us and to atone for all of humanity's sins on the cross.

On the journey to the cross, Jesus was rejected, ridiculed, deserted, denied, and made desolate by those around Him. Yet it was out of His great love for us that He sought to appease God's wrath against sin. It was because of His mercy for us that He chose to be obedient to what the Father had in mind.

Are there times where we forget Jesus' great love for us? Are we aware of the suffering of costly forgiveness that Jesus wants to bestow on us, and how He just wants us to come back to Him?

QUESTION THREE



QUESTION THREE:

3. Jesus had to die because a price had to be paid. Though He was—is the Son of God, God Himself made flesh, He suffered through the most brutal and humiliating punishment in His age for us. In response, He asks for us to fix our eyes upon Him. Anyone who wants to follow Him must deny themselves and take up their own cross (Matt. 16:24).

Though we are fast approaching the brutalities, the terrors and horrors of Good Friday, we must remember that in death, we have life. Jesus died to save us, for He came so that we might have life and have it abundantly (Jn. 10:10), and whoever believes in Him will never die but have eternal life (Jn. 3:16).

Can we continue pondering over this Holy Week the things that we need to surrender to Him? Can we continue to reflect on our response to the cross?

Let us keep asking in prayer, “What is the cross that I have to take up today? How must I deny myself, to follow You? What is the sin I have to acknowledge today, and how can I remember the forgiveness that can be found already in You?”