



Palm Sunday  
more than meets the eye

2026March29 Dan Fisher - Palm Sunday



“I am God, and there is none like me, <sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’” **Is 46:10**



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“The significance of Palm Sunday was lost on me as a child. My first memories of Palm Sunday were of sitting patiently in Sunday school next to my friends, holding palm fronds. When signaled, we waved them high while singing ‘Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!’ to a slightly off-key piano. I understood enough about Palm Sunday as a child to know it was the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and was hailed King of the Jews. But it wasn’t until a few years ago I began to comprehend the significance of what happened on that date and why it’s so profound for followers of Jesus.” Karen Engle, Christian author

<https://www.logos.com/grow/palm-sunday-and-why-the-date-is-so-significant/>

A dark, moody background featuring the silhouettes of palm fronds. The fronds are layered, creating a sense of depth and texture. The lighting is low, highlighting the edges of the leaves.

# 1. The story ...

## Mt 21:1-11, Mk 11:1-11, Lk 19:28-44, Jn 12:12-19

“Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. ... <sup>9</sup> When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ... <sup>12</sup> **The next day** the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> So 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!” <sup>14</sup> And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,” **Jn 12:1-2,9,12-14**

- **The date**

Six days before Passover (the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan) puts Jesus in Bethany on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. “The next day” (Palm Sunday) would have been the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.

- **The donkey**

“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.” **Zech 9:9**

**Kings coming in conquest rode war horses; kings coming in peace rode donkeys**

**Instead of entering the city on a warhorse like a conquering king, Jesus came on a humble animal associated with peace and servanthood.**



Mary rode on the back of a donkey carrying baby Jesus in her womb

The donkey colt symbolized Jesus' Davidic royalty (1 Kings 1:33–38)

Animals never before ridden or yoked were often those preferred for dedication to God (Num 19:2, Deut 21:3, 1 Sam 6:7)

- **The devotion**

Palm branches were not chosen at random; they were widely recognized as symbols of victory and triumph and were symbols of Jewish nationalism

People waved them as a sign of victorious celebration

As the crowd spread their cloaks on the road and laid the palm branches down and waved them, they were expressing hope for deliverance and celebrating what they believed would be a political victory – an act reserved for kings and conquerors alone (2 Kings 9:13)

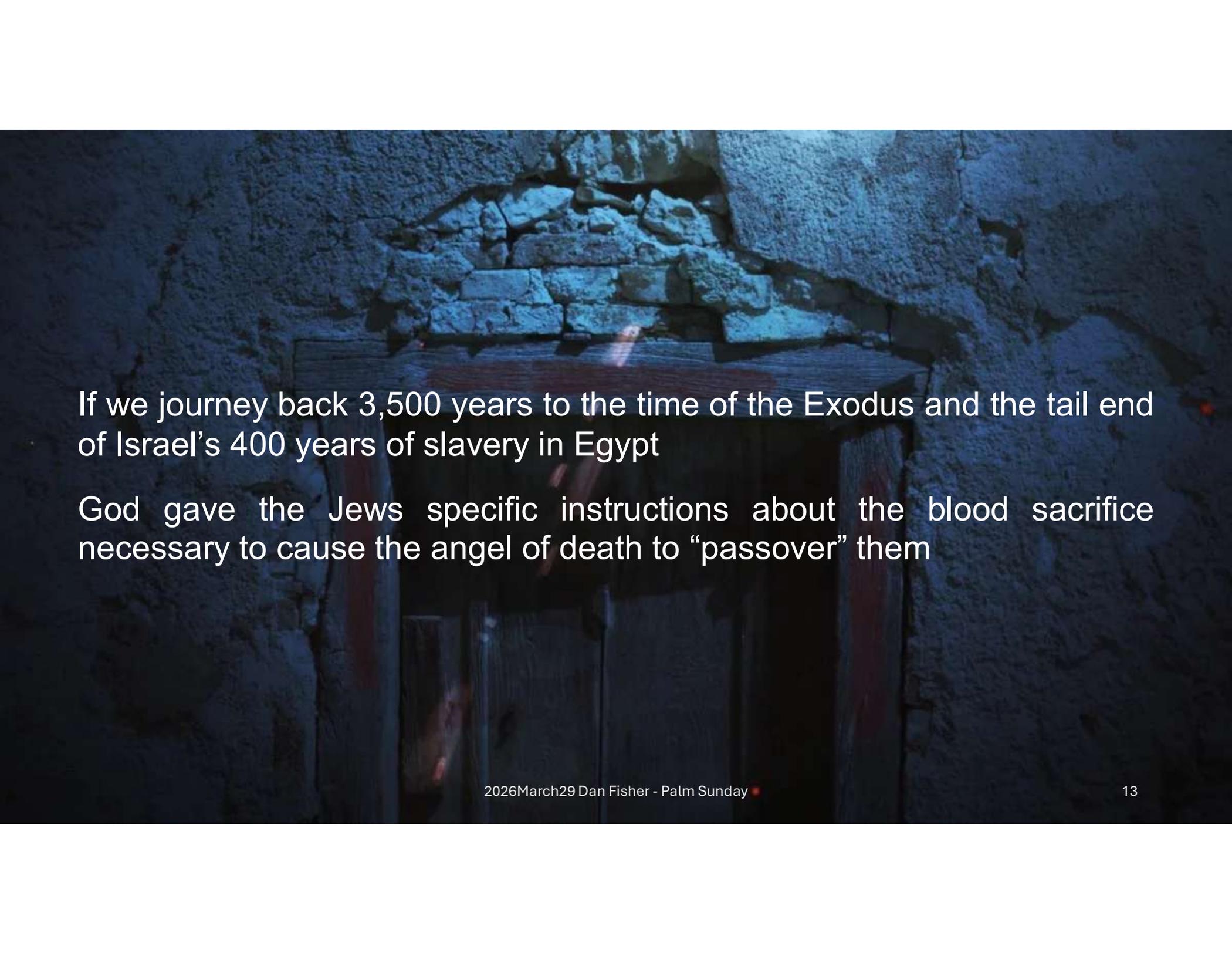
As they shouted, “Hosanna! (Save now!) Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” they were acknowledging Jesus as their king (Ps 118:19-27, Zech 9:9-13)



The people missed the full significance of the circumstances. Two things were happening, but they only saw one: Jesus fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy.

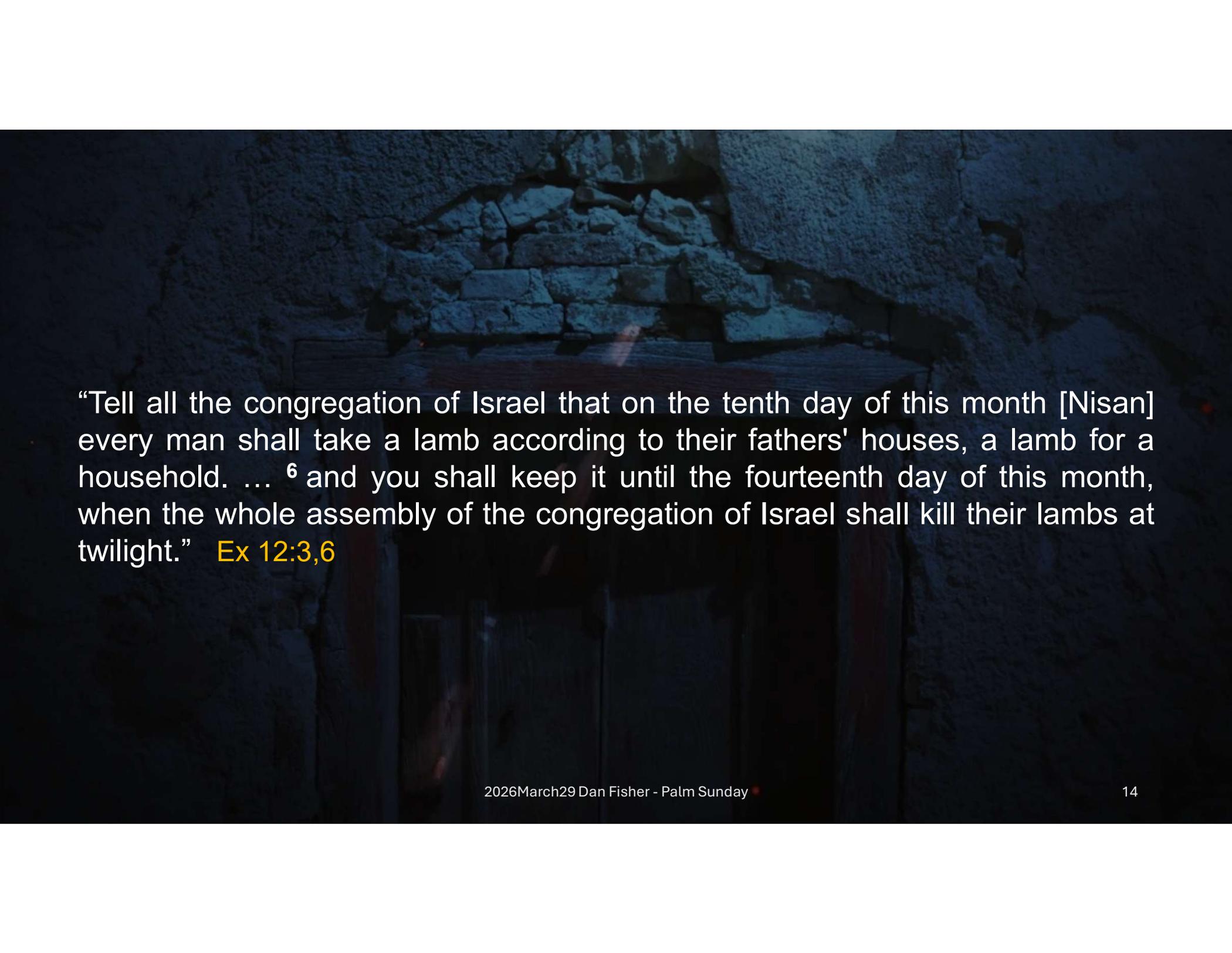
The background of the slide is a dark, monochromatic image of palm fronds. The fronds are silhouetted against a slightly lighter, dark grey background, creating a textured, layered effect. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the edges of the leaves.

## 2. The sacrifice ...

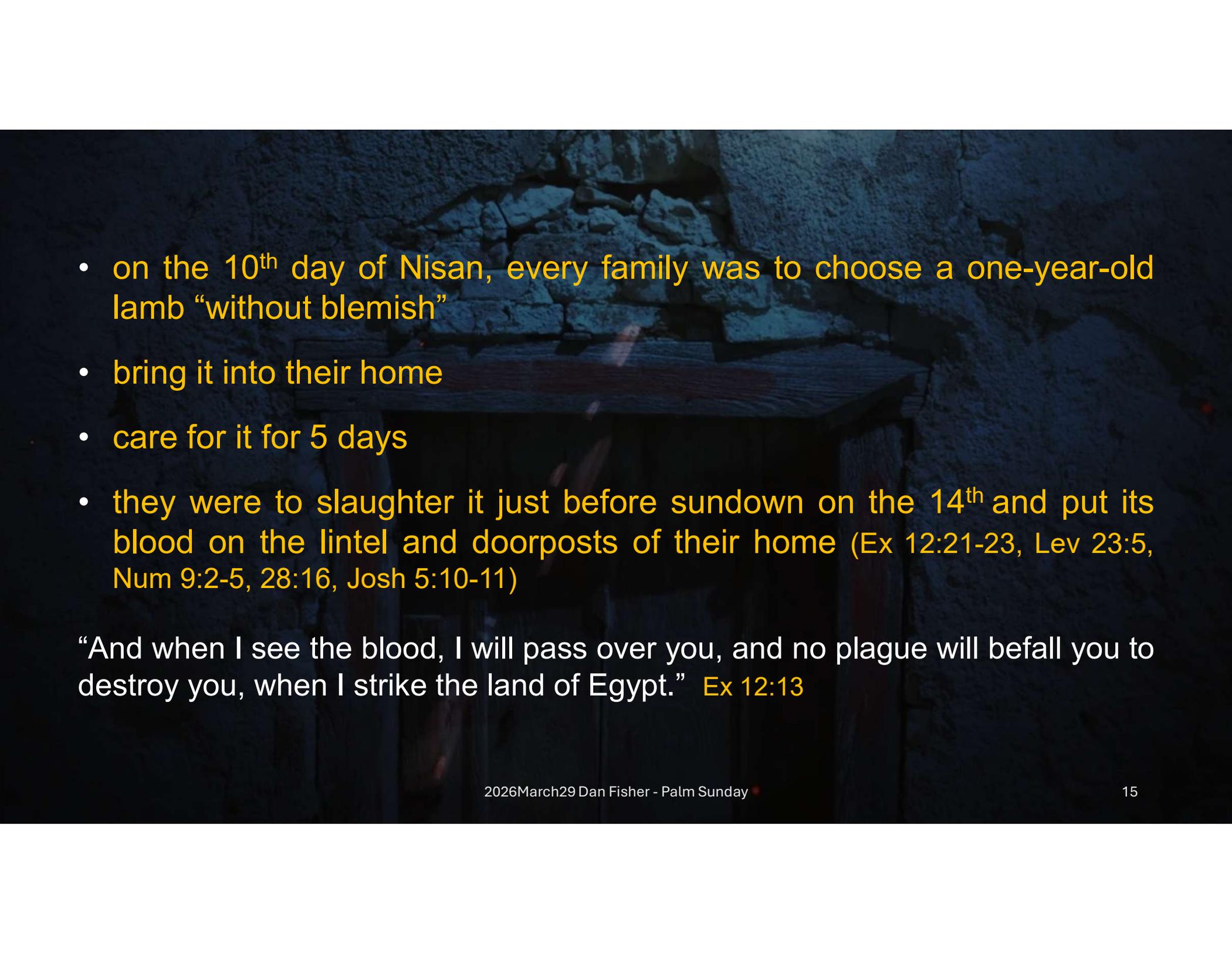


If we journey back 3,500 years to the time of the Exodus and the tail end of Israel's 400 years of slavery in Egypt

God gave the Jews specific instructions about the blood sacrifice necessary to cause the angel of death to “passover” them



“Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month [Nisan] every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ... <sup>6</sup> and 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.” **Ex 12:3,6**

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- on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan, every family was to choose a one-year-old lamb “without blemish”
  - bring it into their home
  - care for it for 5 days
  - they were to slaughter it just before sundown on the 14<sup>th</sup> and put its blood on the lintel and doorposts of their home (Ex 12:21-23, Lev 23:5, Num 9:2-5, 28:16, Josh 5:10-11)

“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.” Ex 12:13

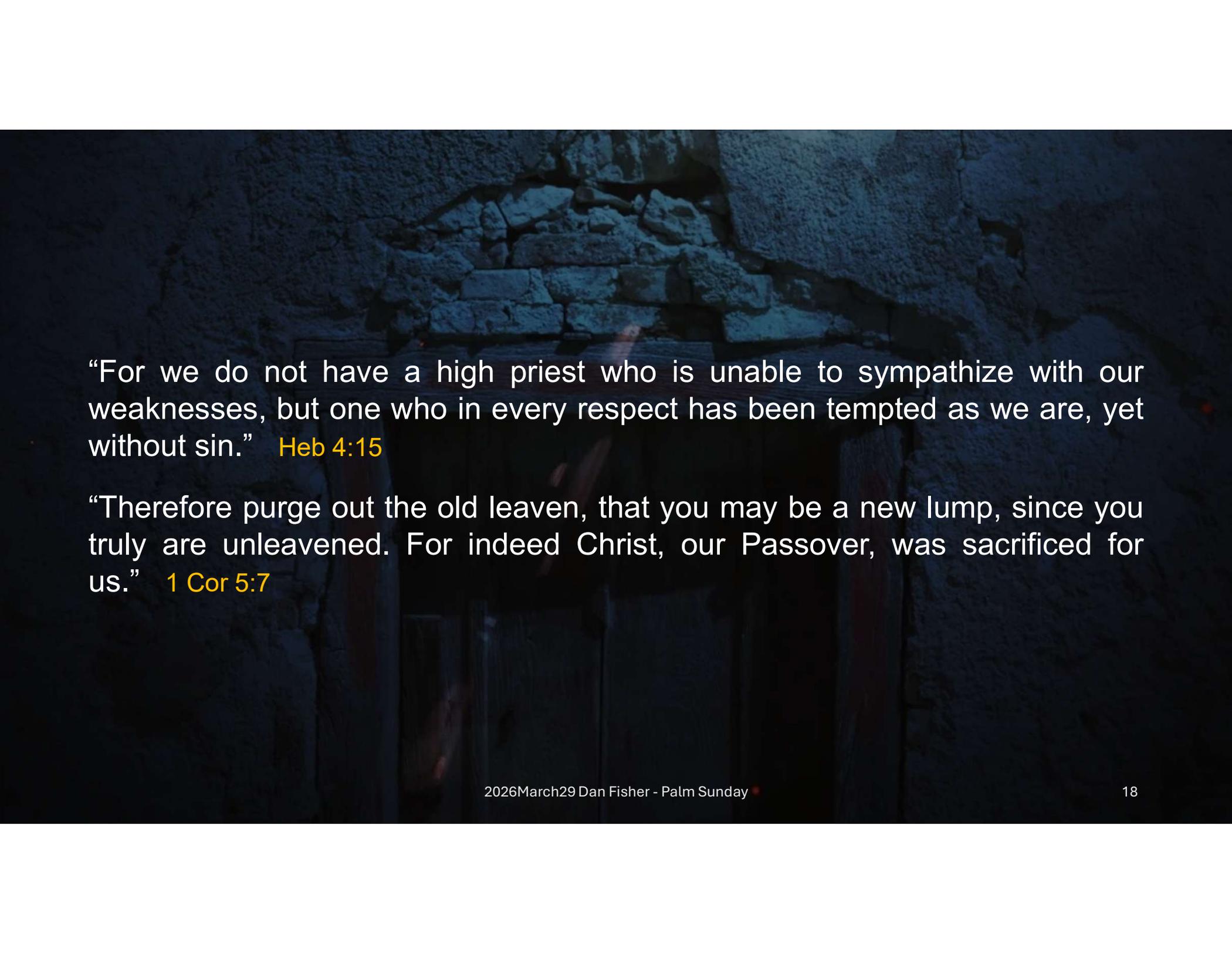
- Because a new Hebrew day begins at twilight “that same night” of the original Passover would have been Nisan 15. It was on this date Israel left Egypt and God redeemed them out of slavery
- Six days before Passover puts Jesus in Bethany on Nisan 9. “The next day” of Jn 12 would have been Nisan 10 – the same “date” the Israelites were to bring “lambs without blemish” into their homes
- Almost 1,500 years after the first Passover in Egypt, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, on Nisan 10

- For the Passover, God required “a lamb without blemish or defect”

“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me [nothing in Me, NKJ]” Jn 14:30

“but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” 1 Pet 1:19

“He committed no sin, neither was deceit [guile] found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.” 1 Pet 2:22-24

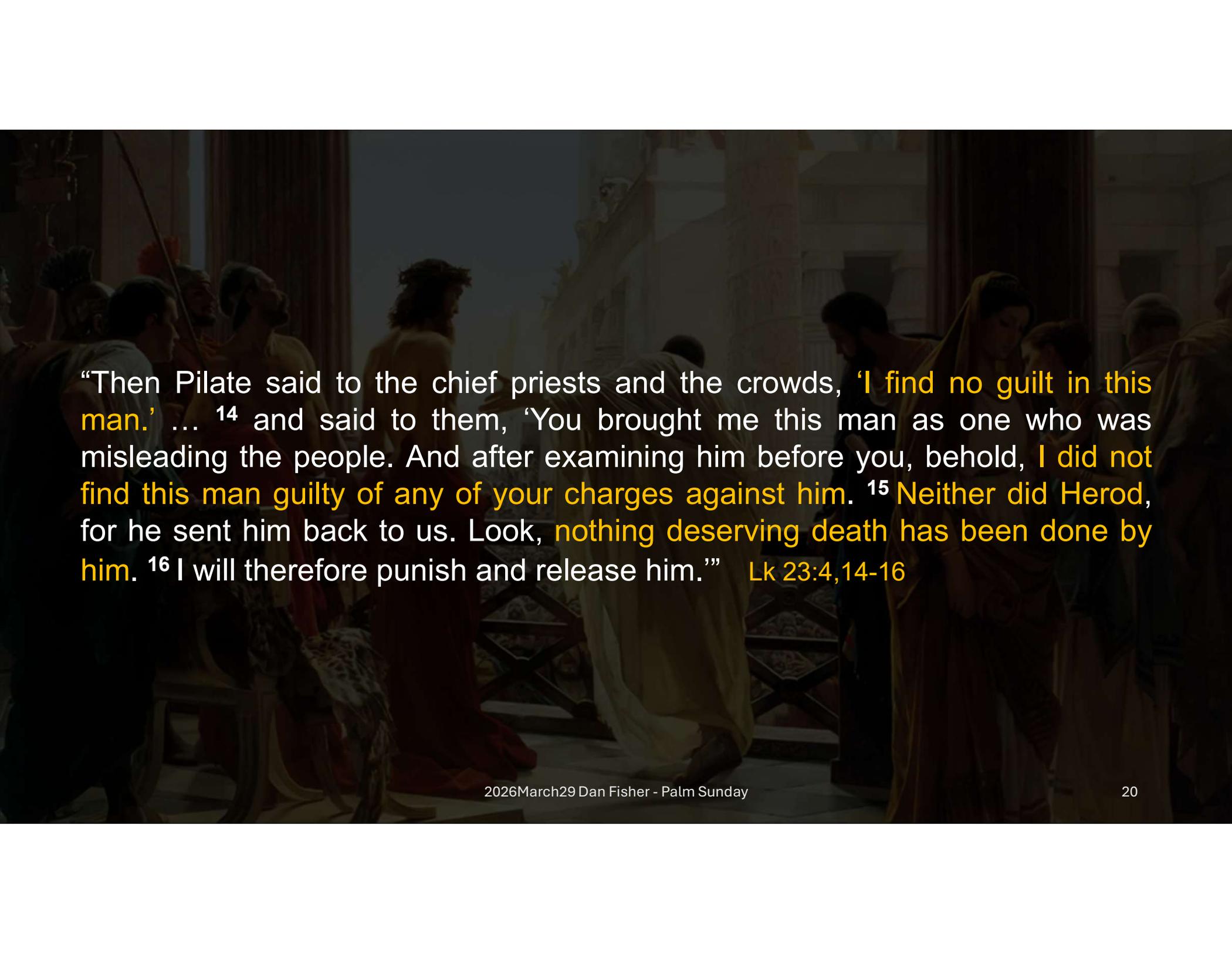


“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” **Heb 4:15**

“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” **1 Cor 5:7**



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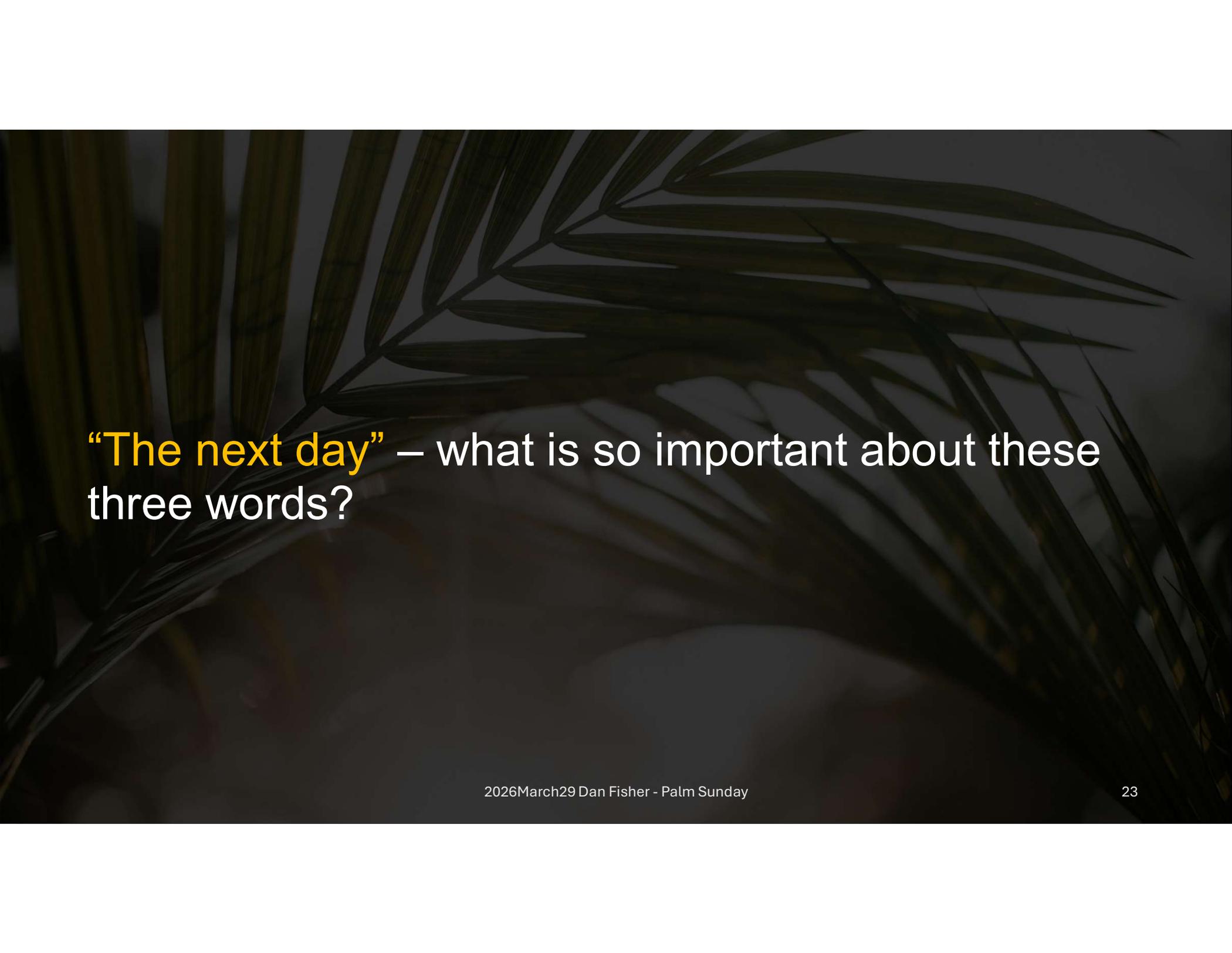
“Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, ‘I find no guilt in this man.’ ... <sup>14</sup> and said to them, ‘You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. <sup>15</sup> Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. <sup>16</sup> I will therefore punish and release him.’” Lk 23:4,14-16



“The next day he [John] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” [Jn 1:29](#)



# 3. The significance ...



“The next day” – what is so important about these three words?



On that Palm Sunday, the Jews understood Jesus to be fulfilling the prophecy of Zech 9:9. What they did not see was that God was offering Jesus as the final Passover lamb to be slaughtered.

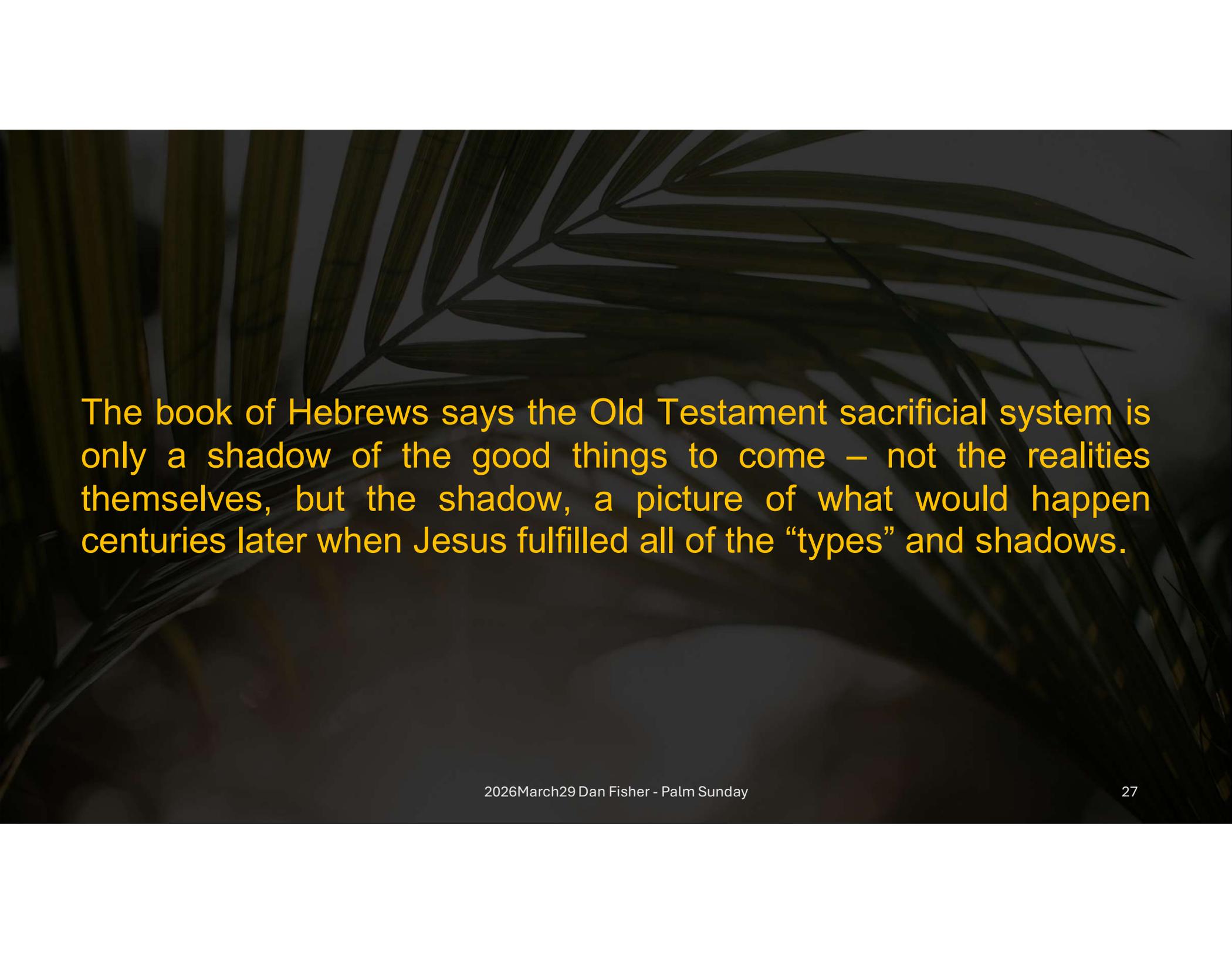


A few days later on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, while some 250,000 lambs were being sacrificed according to God's instruction in Ex 12 – Jesus was being nailed to a cross.

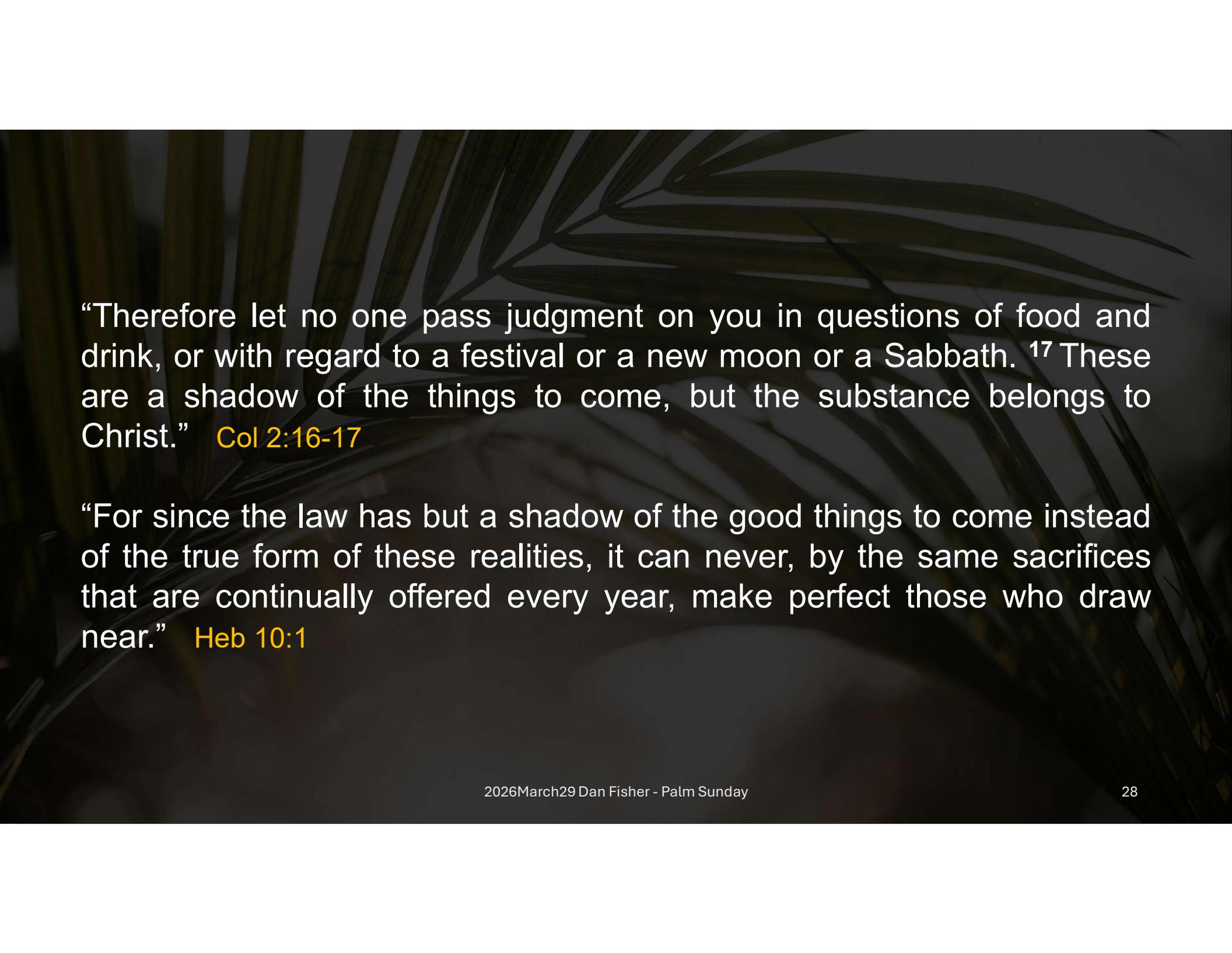
“His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.” **Jn 12:16**



“Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.’” **Jn 12:7**



The book of Hebrews says the Old Testament sacrificial system is only a shadow of the good things to come – not the realities themselves, but the shadow, a picture of what would happen centuries later when Jesus fulfilled all of the “types” and shadows.



“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” Col 2:16-17

“For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.” Heb 10:1

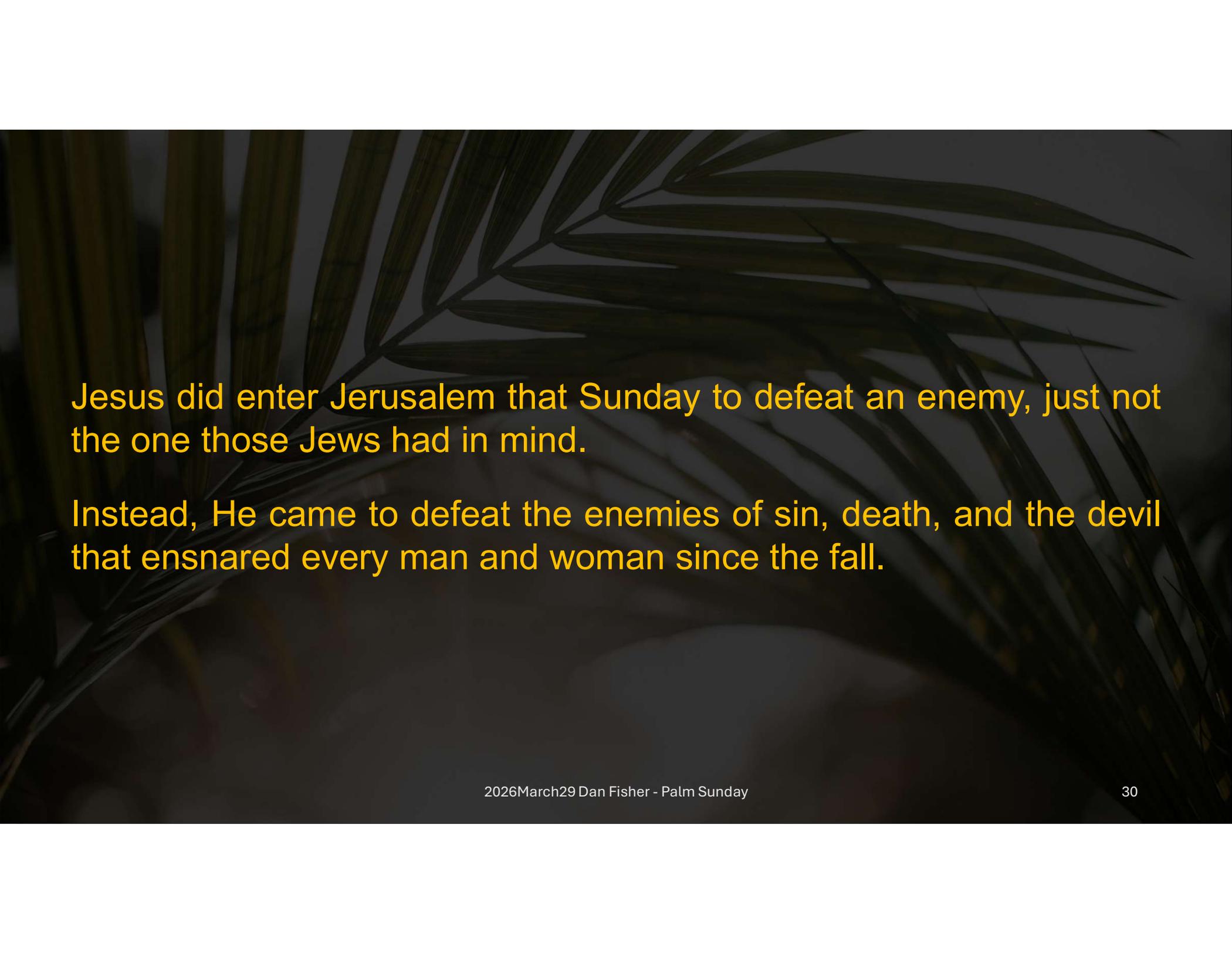


Debbie McDaniel, Christian writer:

“The reign of Christ is far greater than any man’s mind could ever conceive or plan. Man looked for someone to fight their battles in the present-day world. Yet God had the ultimate plan of sending His Son to fight the final battle over death.”

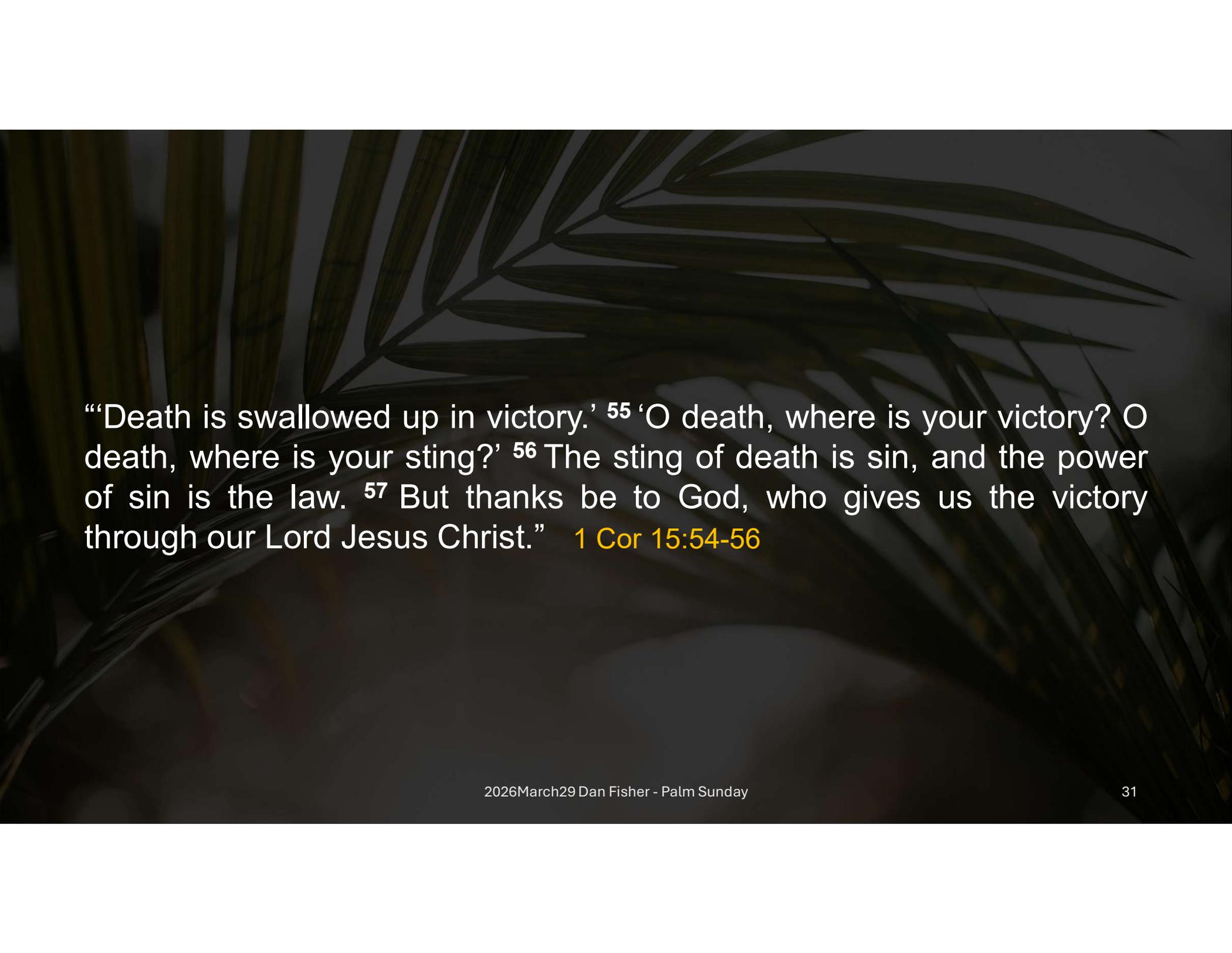
“Five Things About Palm Sunday That Remind Us Christ Is King,” Mar 26, 2026

[https://www.crosswalk.com/special-coverage/lent/5-things-about-palm-sunday-that-remind-us-christ-is-king.html?gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=20553081541&gbraid=0AAAAAD4hHd81xwGzFN\\_h4jYvR3BTqh7s\\_&gclid=EAlalQobChMlv6H0i9nDkwMVOyrUAR1OSSBqEAAYBCAAEgLEbPD\\_BwE](https://www.crosswalk.com/special-coverage/lent/5-things-about-palm-sunday-that-remind-us-christ-is-king.html?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20553081541&gbraid=0AAAAAD4hHd81xwGzFN_h4jYvR3BTqh7s_&gclid=EAlalQobChMlv6H0i9nDkwMVOyrUAR1OSSBqEAAYBCAAEgLEbPD_BwE)

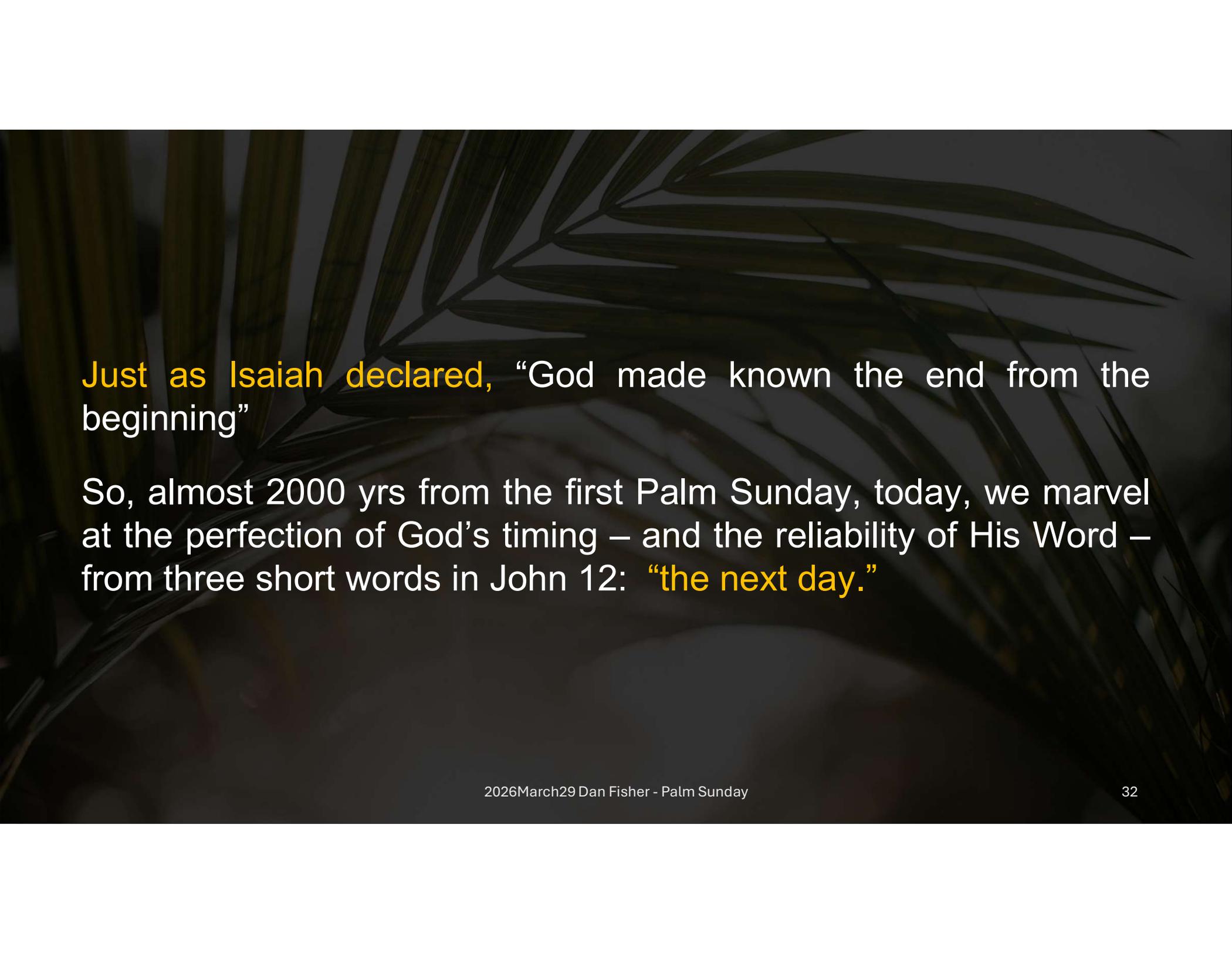


Jesus did enter Jerusalem that Sunday to defeat an enemy, just not the one those Jews had in mind.

Instead, He came to defeat the enemies of sin, death, and the devil that ensnared every man and woman since the fall.

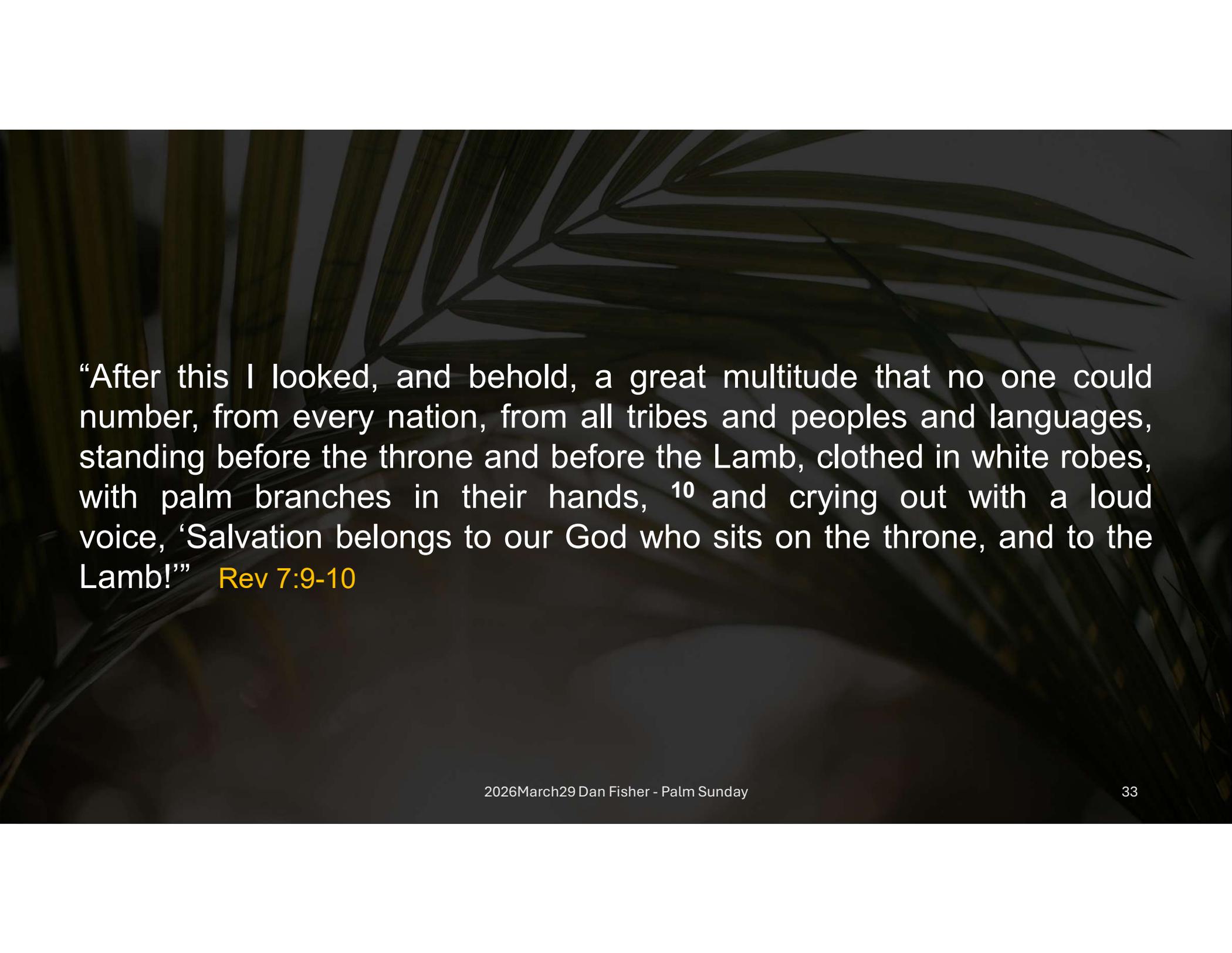
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“Death is swallowed up in victory.’ <sup>55</sup> ‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” **1 Cor 15:54-56**

The background of the slide is a dark, monochromatic image of palm fronds, likely from a date palm, which are silhouetted against a slightly lighter, dark grey background. The fronds are long and feathery, with many individual leaflets visible. They are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and texture, with some fronds in the foreground and others receding into the background.

Just as Isaiah declared, “God made known the end from the beginning”

So, almost 2000 yrs from the first Palm Sunday, today, we marvel at the perfection of God’s timing – and the reliability of His Word – from three short words in John 12: “the next day.”



“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” **Rev 7:9-10**