



REFLECTIONS

March 29, 2015

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16 NKJV

God So Loved the World

Crowds lined the narrow streets in awe of the man passing through the gate into the city. They waved palm branches and dropped to their knees praising him, “Hosanna, Hosanna.” The man humbly astride a donkey appeared rather ordinary; but the crowds knew better. They had met some of the people he healed; they had listened to him teach; they had heard of his miracles. The man passing before them was no ordinary man.

Then the parade ended. Hosannas turned into angry shouts, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” And the Lamb of God would come to suffer as no other sacrificial lamb ever had.

Mosaic Law required sacrifice and there is no sacrifice unless a precious possession is voluntarily surrendered. The offering must be perfect, without defect, the best from all there is. The Lamb who entered Jerusalem that day was God’s lamb, more precious than any possession man has ever known. And the sacrifice would not result in a quick and easy death. The punishment to be inflicted would produce the humiliation and agonizing pain imposed in Hell. The sins of the entire world, past, present, and future, rested on the shoulders of this precious Lamb. He was God’s sacrifice, for *God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son*. But this sacrifice involved more than death. Redeeming the sins of the world also called for intense suffering.

Animal sacrifices were generally quick. A sacrificial lamb would submit to its master, and extend its neck while the master’s razor-sharp knife sliced across it. Blood drained onto the ground reducing the lamb into a state of unconsciousness and then death. But God’s lamb endured much worse.

His face was slapped, He was mocked, He was spat upon. Blood ran down his face after a crown of thorns punctured his brow. Persecutors immobilized his body by tightly binding his hands to a scourging post. Scourging was more than a whipping. In fact lashes were only lightly struck. But three razor-sharp tendrils ripped away flesh and muscle each time the whip jerked back across his body. Finally, his clothing was stripped away and large spikes were driven into his hands and feet to secure his body to the cross. He languished there until at last He gave up his spirit with final words, “It is finished.”

The Lamb suffered an excruciating death in love for and in submission to his Father. And God allowed his Son to suffer through the likes of Hell to die in our place so we should not perish but have everlasting life. *For God so loved the world.*

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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