

Sermon for Good Friday

'They themselves did not enter the governor's palace, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.'

+INJ+

Therefore, it is written: *'the lion shall lay down with the lamb.'*

Let the Passover lamb be slaughtered and devoured in its silence. The Lamb goes to the cross, that He might shed the blood required of man to forgive Adam and all his children's iniquity, now and forever.

A Lamb goes to the cross, but a Lion descends into hell.

The lamb ascends the cross, to suffer for our sins. The lion descends to conquer the source of sin, the devil himself, the father of lies.

It was by a lie that mankind fell, that by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, we would be made like God. Yet now God, who wishes to make us like Him, shall abolish the liar, and teach the us the truth.

So now the lion descends, to abolish the lie. From the cross, and from the death of the lamb, he enters hell. *The lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. He shall triumph.*

He is surrounded by liars, by Pharisees and hypocrites; by traitors and by those who make their living from convenience. By onlookers, those taken up by the moment, which is to say, by regular people. These all turn against him. These all put him to the cross and demand his blood. These all long for his murder. They know it not, but what they long for is that the lion descend.

But the lion *shall triumph.*

For the lamb who has abolished all sin in his flesh upon the cross has become the lion who shall destroy sin from its origin: from hell, from Satan, from the

prince of this world.

Therefore it is written: *'He descended into hell.'*

It is a strange night, dear Christian. For life does combat with death, and good makes war against evil. Is this not the Lord's Day?

How often is the Lord's Day spoken of in the Scriptures. The day when God will punish evil and establish justice. The day when justice will be done, and mercy finished. We always think of this day as far off, as the Last Day, and indeed on the Last Day shall all these things come to their completion.

But the Lion enters hell now, to begin this last day. That everything promised to us in ancient times might find their fulfillment in the cross.

A great war now transpires. We will leave this sanctuary, but beneath our feet the most bloody of every battle takes place: the crucified against the damned one; the lion against the serpent.

The earth melts, the word of the Lord goes forth, nations are in uproar, kingdoms are overthrown.

So shall it be, age after age, as the Lion devours the serpent. For when the serpent is thrown into hell, and the Lion's task is done, He shall rest. Shall not the Christ rest? Him who commanded all to rest of the seventh day? He shall rest, even if in a grave, wrapped in cloth and clothed in spices. He shall rest, for the week of His working is finished. A holy week. A week that is *very good*. In the crucifixion, the end of God's redemptive work would seem to be near.

And yet:

'The father works now, and so does the Son hitherto.'

What shall happen?

'Come and see, and I saw.'

+INJ+

Preached by Pastor Fields