

The Triumphant Entry From Exaltation To Rejection

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I. Introductory Remarks.

John 12:12-13 *The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! `Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!"*

This is a picture of the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem a week before His crucifixion and resurrection from the dead.

In this message I want to look at the life of Jesus during the week of His crucifixion and how He came into Jerusalem as an exalted King in the hearts of God's people and then a week later was rejected and crucified by these same people who had earlier exalted Him as King. What happened during that week that caused so many to turn from Him, only to mock and ridicule Him?

II. The Eventful Week.

The week that Jesus was crucified began in tremendous exaltation and prophetic understanding in the eyes of the people who had been acquainted with Him for the last 31/2 years. He was being fully recognized and heralded as the fulfillment of the coming Messiah. In their eyes they had now fully received Him as the coming King who been prophesied by the prophets.

By the end of this week though, the majority of these people would reject, mock, ridicule and crucify Him as an imposter. What happened in the course of this week that would so drastically turn the hearts of many of these people away from their promised King? Not only would many of their hearts be turned away, but one of his disciples would betray Him and another would deny Him.

Are there lessons about human nature for us to learn that will keep us from falling away after having received the prophetic vision of who Christ is? Are these same elements in our world today that caused these people to turn their backs on their beloved King?

1. His Triumphant Entry Into Jerusalem.

Jesus comes riding into Jerusalem in humility on a donkey's colt, while the

people are going before Him praising God and proclaiming with a loud voice for the wonderful works Jesus had been doing.

Luke 19:28-40 *Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

In this picture we find Jesus being adored, praised and proclaimed as the King of Israel, to the extent that the Pharisees tried to make Him put a stop to it.

2. He Cleanses The Temple.

Luke 19:45-47 *Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him.*

Jesus is not earning points with the religious leaders of the day. The house of God had been turned into a place where people were merchandising God's people. I'm sure a lot of the more common people of the day were involved in this practice as well. They were beginning to see that what Jesus had to offer had the potential of destroying their present security and income. "Is this really what we want?"

3. He Uses A Parable To Speak Against The Chief Priests & Scribes.

Luke 20:19 *And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people; for they knew that He had spoken this parable against them.*

Jesus is going out of His way to draw a clear distinction between what He has to offer the nation of Israel vs. what has been offered to them by their religious leaders. He obviously did not read the book, "How to win friends and influence others".

4. Jesus Spars With The Pharisees & The Sadducees On A Number Of Issues.

Luke 20:20 *So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the*

power and the authority of the governor.

Again, we find Jesus pointing the way to what real truth is as opposed to the religious traditions that were being taught and practiced by the religious leaders of Israel.

The truth is continually driving a deeper wedge between what Jesus has to offer and what they had to offer. The religious leaders see no other alternative than to find some way of getting rid of Jesus. They are being threatened!

5. Jesus Issues A Warning To All Of The People Concerning The Scribes.

Luke 20:46 *"Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts.*

The scribes were Pharisees who had become the zealous defenders of the law and the true teachers of the common people. By N.T. times they held undisputed sway as the recognized exponents of the law and the revered representatives of Judaism. They received the deep respect of the people, as indicated in the honorable term rabbi, meaning "my master, or teacher." Proudly they claimed the positions of first rank, sought the public acclaim of the masses, and dressed in long robes like the nobility.¹

What is happening is that there is a major tug of war going on in the hearts of all these people. These were a people who had been taught and trained by the scribes and now Jesus is coming along and challenging them with the truth and real authority. Their loyalties are now divided and they are susceptible to being pulled in either direction dependent upon the current situation of the moment.

6. Jesus Begins To Prepare His Disciples For His Second Coming.

In the midst of all that is transpiring during this important and very crucial week of Jesus' ministry to mankind, He now begins to expound on His second coming and the events that will precede it.

Luke 21:25-27 *"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. "Then*

¹ The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, pg. 761.

they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Jesus is looking beyond the importance of this day and into the future of all believers who would come to know Him. The fascinating thing about Jesus is that He simply continues to speak the truth and the things that are necessary for our salvation without being sidetracked by the scribes. He does not allow their attacks or disputes steer Him away from what His real purpose is.

7. The Plot and Sentence To Kill Jesus.

The Jews are now fully aware that Jesus has gained the hearts of the people and that they are losing control of their nation. Their jealousy and self protection are keeping them from receiving the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah. Their only recourse is to have Him put to death. In order to do this they must do it in a deceptive enough of a way to avoid mass hysteria. *(Luke 21:38)*

Luke 22:1-2 *Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.*

From this point on the plot is worked out on how to seize Jesus at the perfect moment without causing an uprising. Judas goes on to betray Jesus in the Garden and Jesus is taken before the Sanhedrin, which is the highest Jewish council during the Greek and Roman periods. During this time Jesus is mocked and beaten, and Peter, who once had the great revelation of who Jesus was, denies Him. Jesus is experiencing one of His greatest moments of rejection. He is also handed over to Pontius Pilate, then to Herod & then back to Pilate, who issued the sentence that the Jews had requested.

Matthew 27:20 *But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.*

Matthew 27:22-23 *Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!" Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"*

III. Concluding Thoughts.

What was it about Jesus that caused the scribes and chief priests to reject Him? Was it because they were losing control and weren't willing to let go? Jesus challenged all of their pre-conceived ideas and philosophy. The truth that He spoke challenged their security and the very foundation of their spirituality.

How many are out there today who reject Jesus simply because you are afraid to let go of your past and present securities?

How was it that the Scribes and the chief priests were able to sway the multitudes to reject Jesus after following Him and even receiving Him as their Messiah? They understood and practiced the manipulative tactics of swaying a people.

Luke 23:23 *But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.*

What is happening in today's world that would have the potential of drawing Christians away from their Lord? There are many voices through our political system, the media, education system etc., who are trying to sway the multitudes from the truth that Jesus Christ has to offer. Just as they mocked Jesus and what He stood for, we shall be mocked and ridiculed. Was this why Peter denied the Lord? Will we let the sound of the world drown out the voice of Jesus or will we embrace Jesus and His suffering? Let us not allow the many screaming voices in today's culture to weaken our faith in Jesus Christ!