

The Palm Sunday Path: From King to Crucified Mt. 21:1-17

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC April 13th, 2025

As early as Aristotle (384-322 BC) the world's great thinkers were certain that our planet was the center of the universe. In the 1st century Claudius Ptolemy offered astronomical "proof" that we were in fact the very center of God's cosmic. Some 1500 later Nicolaus Copernicus revealed that we had had it all wrong for millennium. He was followed by Galileo who offered further evidence of our place in the Universe, and he was excommunicated and arrested for his trouble. Few would still challenge our place in the Universe, But Fewer still have really surrendered their own Supremacy or Centrality in their own "universes". This tendency is painfully illustrated in the events of the Passion Week where the crowds shifted from: Praise to Persecution; Cheers to Jeers; Rejoicing to Reviling!

Never has a week begun with such hope, and ended with such horror.

It began with their welcoming Jesus as their King...and ended with them calling for his crucifixion!

Jn 19:15 *"Shall I crucify your King?"* How did celebration become condemnation?

In response to Pilate's similar question, Jesus simply answered: *"I bear witness unto the truth."* Jn 18:37

What Was The "Truth" That Caused The Crowds To Turn On Him?

1. The Coming Of Their King Was Demeaning (*Embarrassing*) Mt 21:5 and Zech. 9:9

A. He didn't Act like any King they knew.

1) He Was Their King, Yet He submitted to Another. Jn 8:26-29

2) He Was Their Master, Yet He Served Them. Jn 13:13-17; Mark 10:45

3) He Surrendered His Will To Glorify The Father. (Mt. 26:52-54; Luke 22:42)

Jn 12:27,28 *"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."*

Our selfish Natures cannot easily understand a King who isn't self serving! Mt 11:19

2. The Cry Of The Crowd Was Demanding (*Self Serving*)

Mt. 21:9 "HOSANNA" literally means: *"Save Us NOW!"*

A. Their focus was on what their King would do for them!

John 6:37 *"Ye seek me, ...because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."*

1) Instead of feeding them (again) he spoke of commitment and application of His truths. Jn 6:43-66

Vs 66 *"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."*

He vulnerably asked the apostles: *"wilt thou also go away?"* Vs 67 (Join this self serving crowd?)

2) This tendency still plagues the people of God. In Phil. 3:18-20 Paul many believers as:

"The enemies of the Cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, Whose god is their belly, Whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things... for our conversation (Polit'euma: "politics" {priorities, community}) is in heaven"

See also Romans 12:1,2; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; Col. 3:1-5

B. This attitude destroys people and Nations!

1) Politicians stay in power by giving their constituents what they want! (*Contrast President Kennedy (1960) "ask what you can do for your country" with more modern politicians!*)

The crowds will usually support the one who serves (or promises) them the most. (People don't really want a God, they want a congenial rich uncle to spoil them.)

3. The Conduct Of The King Was Threatening! Vs 12,13 (Endangered their control)

A. Notice Jesus' Palm Sunday Priorities! Mt 21:12-13

1) Cleansing the Temple: *The Moneychangers Were Working For The Priests!*

B. The Priest's Were Jealous Of Jesus' Popularity. Vs 15

1) He threatened their control over the people. John 11:47,48 *"If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place..."*

2) No wonder Jesus wept when he observed in Mt. 23:37-38: *"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."*

Conclusion: What turned the Crowds against Christ?

Jesus' conduct during the Passion week reinforced their concerns that:

- 1) It was "Demeaning" to follow a servant hearted King.
- 2) He didn't always give in to the "Demands" of their self-serving natures.
- 3) His (God's) priorities "Endangered" or threatened their control.

Even Pilate *"knew that for envy they had delivered him."* Mt 27:18 When he sought his release, the crowd shouted: *"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"* (Lk 23:21) Shocked by their irrational rage he asked again: *"Why, what evil hath he done?"* Luke 23:22 What "Evil" did Jesus really do?

His very nature threatened to dethrone them! Jn 3:19

Ultimately there's only room for one God in each life! (Ex 20:3; Col. 1:16-19)

AW Tozer observed: *"In every Christian heart there's a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne until he puts himself on the cross. If he refuses the cross, he remains on the throne."*

Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today.

We want to be saved but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying.

We remain king within the little kingdom of Man-soul and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar, but we doom ourselves to shadows of weakness and spiritual sterility."

Application: A self-centered faith (life) is ultimately Useless, because it's ultimately Fruitless!

The fruitless fig tree illustrated this. Mt. 21:18-22 (Luke 13:6,7; John 15:1-16)

Russian Nuclear Submarine *Kursk* (K-141) sank during a training exercise in relatively shallow water in the Barents sea in Aug. 2000. British and Norwegian teams were available to rescue survivors, but Russia declined. Lt. Dmitriy Kolesnikov, and 23 others (out of a crew of 118) made their way to the back of the sub. Notes found on their bodies indicated that they survived for several days waiting in vain for help that was available, but not accepted.

While this is a terrible tragedy, it illustrates the sad truth that we're all "sunk" by our sin. Jesus offers to save (literally rescue) us. But we must let him do it! In Mt. 11:28,29 he asks: *"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ye shall find rest..."*

He challenged the crowds of his day in John 5:39,40 to: *"Search the scriptures; in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."*

What keeps you from coming to the King?

Has he disappointed you? Has he "Denied" you your "rightful rule"?

Have you submitted to Him? (Given him the "Preeminence" in your life?)

Col. 1:17,18 *"He is before all things, ... that in all things he might have the preeminence."*