

Palm Sunday 2.0

There are a great number of traditions that surround the Easter season. Not all of them are necessarily scriptural, but everything about Easter begs to be magnified. Today, we are going to look at what is recognized as Palm Sunday. When we look at what happened on that day, there are so many things that could speak to us from the Scriptures. It is usual when preaching on this passage to assume that the same crowd that was worshiping on Palm Sunday was the same crowd that called for the crucifixion of Christ two days later. When you examine the Scriptures more carefully, it seems very evident that the crowd on Sunday was replaced by a new crowd, the corrupt religious leaders and their followers. What looked like the start of a joyous occasion quickly went sour. Nevertheless, there will be a special joy that coming that nobody anticipated that is even beyond the Resurrection.

I would like to focus on the worship that was extended to Christ on that day. The Messiah had to present himself, be rejected, and crucified. Because of this, the worship of Christ as He presented Himself as the King was cut short. The reason I have called this sermon Palm Sunday 2.0 is because His glorious presentation as King at His Second Coming will complete His glory. What happened on the first Palm Sunday was a glimpse of what will take place when the King of Kings is truly crowned and sitting on His throne. That first Palm Sunday of the distant past was simply a precursor of one which is yet to come. Not that we know that it will occur on a Sunday, but there were so many comparisons and contrasts to that first Palm Sunday that this title seems appropriate.

1. The first presentation of the King -

John 12:9-15 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.
10But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;
11Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.
12On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,
13Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.
14And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,
15Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

Zech 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

That first Palm Sunday was a wonderful time of joy and rejoicing as some publicly acknowledged Christ as their Messiah and proclaimed Him as their King. The sorrowful part was that not all Israel had really accepted Him in their hearts.

John 12:37-43 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not

on him:

38That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

41These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. **[The original prophecy spoke of the possibility of believing if the people repented. This is indicated in two other Gospels. Here, the reference to Isaiah is understood as a judgment of spiritual blindness if you do not repent.]**

42Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

43For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

The unbelieving rulers under the influence of the Pharisees took steps to repress the presentation of Christ as Israel's King.

Luke 19:37-40 And when he was come nigh, even now at 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 that they had seen;

38Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

How the week started

He came from the Mount of Olives in glory.
He enters as King with a multitude of friends.
His disciples were honored to serve Him.
Garments were spread before Him.
The crowd beautified His path.
He rode into the city.
The prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled.
He was saluted as their King.

How the week ended

He was taken to Mount Golgotha in shame.
He leaves as a criminal with a mob of enemies.
His disciples were ashamed of Him.
Stripped of His garments, lots were cast for them.
The crowd spit in His face.
He was compelled to carry His cross out of the city.
The prophecy of Isaiah 53 was fulfilled.
He was rejected, condemned, and crucified as a blasphemer.

2. The second presentation of the King -

Of all the things we could take note as we look at Palm Sunday is the issue of worship. As part of the overall occasion, at that time their worship was diminished by the illegal trial that was to take place. Instead of disappointment at the rejection of the King, we need to look at His presentation in the larger context of eschatology, which is the study of the end times. The worship of the King at His Second Coming becomes magnified and even greater. When We reflect on Palm Sunday, we often

look with sadness at what was about to happen because we are reminded of our sinfulness that put the King on the cross. Ever since the Revelation was written, we can also look at Palm Sunday with a sense of joy as we look even further into the future and see the glorious presentation of Jesus as the King of all.

Rev 7:9-17 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

...

15Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Jesus is the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne and worshiped because He is God. This is something that is hard for some to understand because God is different in His nature. He is not a man as we are. John provides some clarification on the identity of Jesus as God.

The fact that Jesus is worshiped brings even greater significance. It is not just that God, the Father, has done some magnificent work. Christ Himself is magnified and worshiped. In ancient times of the fourth century, the Arians downplayed the nature of Christ as though He were merely some created, but exalted, being. In modern times, the Unitarians often view Jesus as a moral teacher, a prophet, or a human being with exceptional spiritual insight, but not as God incarnate. By denying the deity of Christ, there are a great many doctrines regarding salvation that became corrupted.

There are those who misuse a principle of Greek grammar to claim that Jesus is *a* god. The problem with this is that if you worship Jesus as merely *a* god, then you are violating Exod 34:14.

Exod 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God:

If Christ can be worshiped, it is only because He *is* God. The way the Christ deniers get around this is to redefine the word *worship* to mean *bow before* when it comes to Jesus but *worship* when it comes to God, the Father. They ignore the multitudinous times that the Greek word for *worship* means, in English, *worship!*

Matthew clarified that *worship* is understood in the religious sense when he distinguished between *falling down* from *worshipping* when Satan tempted Christ in Matt 4:9,10. If worship simply

means to bow down, then when Satan called on Christ to *bow down and worship*, he would have been merely redundant and repeating himself. Satan didn't say *bow down* and *bow down*, he said bow down and worship because worship is a religious act, not merely bowing down. Jesus then confirmed this when He said such worship belongs only to God.

The elders before the throne of God declared such worship belonged to God in Rev 11.

Rev 11:16-17 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

Who is this one *who is and was and is yet to come*? John identified Him as the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty, in Rev 1.

Rev 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

John clearly identifies Him again in vs. 11 as the Alpha and Omega and adds on that He is the first and the last.

Rev 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last:

Then in vs. 17-18, He further identifies the First and the Last in a very special way:

Rev 1:17-18 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Now, what you should conclude is that we worship, and not merely bow down, before this One Who was and is and yet to come, who is also the Lord God Almighty (from ch. 11 and ch. 1), the Alpha and Omega (from ch. 1), the First and the Last (from ch. 1), *and the One Who lived and died and is alive forever more*. Now, unless God the Father lived and died and was resurrected, the only One Who is receiving worship in these verses in the Revelation has to be Jesus Christ. Since He is being worshiped with the worship due to God, then He cannot be *a* god, He must actually *be* God.

It would be worthwhile to meditate on these verses and not to presume that we can fit God neatly into a box of our own understanding.

This is what makes Palm Sunday 2.0 so exciting. What the corrupt religious leaders and the devil thought had been foiled in His first coming would not be held back in His second coming. Jesus said that if the disciples had held their peace the stones would cry out at His first presentation. In His second coming, the rocks *will* cry out with earthquakes in diverse places before King Jesus appears.

Luke 21:8-11 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

9But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end *is* not by and by.

10Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

11And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Look at Rev 7:9-10 again. It is very similar to Palm Sunday 1.0 with Palms and shouts of Hosannah.

Rev 7:9-10 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

On Palm Sunday 1.0, the Jews quoted Psalm 118, one of the *hillel* Psalms, or *praise* Psalms, that were sung at Passover. They knew exactly what they were doing. When we read *Salvation to our God* in Rev 7:10, this is also a quotation from that Psalm.

Ps 118:25-26 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

The disciples cried out *Hosanna* in Matt 21:9, which is *Save now* in Psa 118.

Matt 21:9 ...Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

There is no mistaking the character they were ascribing to Christ because Psalm 118, which they were quoting, identifies Christ with the name of the Great I Am, Jehovah. Jesus accepted this praise due only to One Who *is* God. This was a major factor why the leaders wanted them to stop, but Jesus would not silence them. Compare this verse to Ps 68:20:

Ps 68:20 *He that is* our God *is* the God of salvation [**the name *Jesus* literally means the God of Salvation**]; and unto GOD the Lord *belong* the issues from death.

In the typical Hebrew poetic form, the God of salvation, Jehovah-shua, or Jesus, is identified with Jehovah.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Because God Almighty saves and salvation is only by the name of Jesus, we understand that God

the Father and God the Son are so infinitely and intimately identified as one. This is how Jesus can be worshiped as the King in His Second Coming.

Phil 2:10-11 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;
11And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

On the first Palm Sunday, the elders hid for fear of the Jews. On the next Palm Sunday, the elders will be shouting in heaven! On the first Palm Sunday the crowd was small. On the next Palm Sunday, the heavens will be filled with millions of the redeemed! On the first Palm Sunday, they were not totally sure of Who Christ was. On the next Palm Sunday, they will know Christ in His glory! The first Palm Sunday turned into a mockery with a crown of thorns. The next Palm Sunday, the saints will cast their crowns at His feet! The first Palm Sunday, the Jews failed to receive Christ as King. The next Palm Sunday will be King over all!

Which crowd are you part of? Are you part of the crowd who rejected the King, or will you be part of the crowd shouting glory before the throne? Have you received Him as your King, or is He just *a* god among many idols in your life? Either He is King *of* all or He is not King *at* all. To have your place before the throne, you have to surrender your heart, confess that you are a sinner, ask His forgiveness and He will give you His eternal pardon!

For those who have received Him as King, are we truly honoring our King in our vocabulary, how we present ourselves, our lifestyle, our entertainment, or how we plan to serve Him? If were in a mere court of law on earth, we would change our speech very quickly and how we present ourselves. When we are at work, we honor our employers. How much infinitely more so the KING OF KINGS?

1. The first presentation of the King - John 12:9-15, Zech 9:9, John 12:37-43, Luke 19:37-40
2. The second presentation of the King - Rev 7:9-17, Exod 34:14, Rev 11:16-17, 1:8-18, Luke 21:8-11, Rev 7:9-10, Ps 118:25-26, Matt 21:9, Ps 68:20 , Acts 4:12, Phil 2:10-11

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