

Wednesdays in the Word
Digging Deeper April 8, 2020
Read Matthew 21:1-11
“Remember?”

Remember 9-11? We can all state where we were and what we were doing when the news hit. As the events progressed we were overcome with shock and horror. Many of us also jumped into action. We began to volunteer our time and effort to do whatever we could to assist first responders, from sending water and supplies to donating goods and services. Some of us got over the bridge to join in the effort to dig on “the pile”. Patriotism ran high as cars were adorned with flags and flagpoles were planted in yards. We began to laud the heroism of those who ran “in” to the disaster and many of our young men and women joined the military and other emergency organizations. Let us all at this time also thank God for the many medical personnel and essential workers who are literally risking their lives to stay on the job while a virus overspreads the land at this time. Ask the Lord for forgiveness and mercy so we can be restored to health and peace. As horrible as the circumstances are now and were then, our response was unified and compassionate. Even our politicians back then seemed to get along for a while. But before long a change crept over us. America’s patriotism started to wear off just as the car flags started to wear out. Soon a heavy anti American sentiment rose up from within our nation and it has worsened since. This, at least, among a large disillusioned portion of our nation. Tragedy can unite and divide. Those who love the USA though, have found a deeper devotion to this country and its symbols and ideals and to our God.

How is it that praise and devotion to our heroes rapidly decays into loathing and disrespect? Police, firemen, EMTs and the military now endure a level of disdain from some of the very people they serve. Mankind is fickle and easily led astray. The Lord aptly likens us to sheep. Compare these verses. Psalm 119:176, Isaiah 53:6 and Jeremiah 50:6. Notice the progression from the individual to the group to the to the reason for our decline. People don’t simply develop negativity on their own. They are led astray by false teachers and malicious mentors. Trusted shepherds betray their trust to pursue their own delusions and desire to take their charges with them. See Matthew 23:13 and 15.

In our passage for today we see the crowds praising God for His Messiah who would enter Jerusalem as a King coming in peace and as a “Hero” who would destroy Roman rule and usher in the Messianic age of grace and peace. See Zechariah 9:8-10 and Luke 4:17-22. Note Messiah’s reference to salvation (‘wide open freedom’ in the Hebrew. Also a root to the name Jesus.) Note also Jesus’ reference to deliverance (to ‘send away sins and to pardon’ in the Greek.) The people quickly jumped into action to be a part of the proceedings by spreading palm branches and donating clothing and livestock. The injustice and intolerance of Rome disgraced the Jews of Jesus’ time so He was readily accepted and praised as the answer to their problems. Yet again, just as the worthy accolades of the heroism and the intense patriotism of 9-11 was quickly forgotten by so many, the crowds in our text were turned from praising their true King to rejecting Him and demanding His death. In barely a week they were led astray. Jealous leadership could not bear to see this man proclaimed above them. Matthew 27:17-23. In verse 20 the word ‘destroy’ is used. It means to ‘put entirely out of the way’. Such hatred of a leader they cherished days before.

Incidentally, a study of Daniel 9:24-26 can be compared to calendars and histories showing that Jesus entered the city as Messiah on Palm Sunday, on the precise day of the prediction 173,880 days prior to His arrival. Also, these verses are the only mention of the word Messiah in the Bible. Messiah is translated Christ in the New Testament. Both mean "Anointed One". This man, the God-Man was chosen or anointed before time to pay the ransom for our souls, purchasing us from slavery to sin.

We are often reminded to remember 9-11. "Never forget!" we say. Remember the suffering of our nation and the first responders, many of whom even now, are dying of cancers and diseases incurred by their brave response to the tragedy. Jesus tells us to remember Him in our communion meal for His sacrificial death and joyful resurrection. Luke 22:19-20. We honor our heroes but some often forget or deny them. Our true Hero, our Saviour Jesus Christ, was honored on Palm Sunday and Crucified on Good Friday by many of those who praised Him only days before. You, my christian friend, are not likely to forget or reject Jesus as you also well appreciate the miserable memory of Sept 2001 and the fearless ones who came to the nation's rescue. Our national need for salvation from our enemies is a reminder that our eternal salvation through Jesus Christ vanquished our greatest enemy, death. Let us remain faithful to the memory of the great day that caused rejoicing in Jerusalem in joining those who proclaimed, "Hosanna!", which is "Save, now I pray!" Please share this Good News to our nation in need. Take the opportunity to thank those who serve. Sometimes that's all they receive. God bless you all. Amen