

Palm Sunday  
The Road to Superficial Popularity and Beyond

**Introduction:** Remember that there is only **one** Gospel, but we have **four** reliable witnesses. They **complement** each other but never **contradict** each other. As Andreas Kostenberger reminds us, we need to read the four witnesses both **vertically** (study them as solos) and **horizontally** (study them in harmony).

**1) The immediately preceding Sabbath—March 27-28, 33 AD**

- a) Jesus has headed north through Samaria and lower Galilee, then east and south on the eastern side of the Jordan River to join with the crowds on their way to Jerusalem to observe Passover (Luke 17:11).
  - i) Josephus (37-100 AD) claimed upward to 2.7 million people attended Passover, sacrificing 256,500 lambs.
  - ii) During these few weeks He teaches several lessons and performs some miracles along the way. (Luke 17:20-19:28; Mark 10:1-52; Matt. 19:1-20:34)
    - (1) **Teaching:** the imminence of the Kingdom, prayer, divorce, children, the dangers of wealth, reward for following Messiah, third clear statement of His death and resurrection (privately to the 12), selfish ambition, Zaccheus
    - (2) **Heals:** 10 lepers and, later, blind Bartimaeus
  - iii) His teaching is intended to provoke a response from His listeners.
  - iv) His disciples are clearly anticipating the establishing of the Kingdom (Luke 19:11)
- b) He spends Sabbath (Friday evening through Saturday evening) with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany. (John 11:55-12:1)
  - i) The crowd He is traveling with continue on into Jerusalem to get there before Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday.
    - (1) **What?** They tell the city Jesus is coming.
    - (2) **When?** They tell the city Jesus is coming at a specific time: on Sunday.
    - (3) **Where?** They tell the city Jesus is coming down a specific road: from Bethany and Bethphage.
  - ii) Jesus enjoys a feast at the house of Simon the leper, at which Mary anoints His feet. (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:2-8)
    - (1) Mary is rebuked by Judas Iscariot and in turn Jesus rebukes Judas.
    - (2) Judas makes his plans to betray Jesus after this rebuke. (Matt. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6)
  - iii) The crowd wants to see Jesus and Lazarus—John 12:9-11
    - (1) The chief priests/Sadducees plan to kill Lazarus. (John 12:10-11)
    - (2) Remember that Lazarus has been raised from the dead within the last month or two. He is still trending news.
- c) By stopping in Bethany, he accomplishes two significant victories:

- i) He has **heightened the excitement** and fascination of the people, laying the groundwork for Sunday's entry into Jerusalem.
  - (1) The atmosphere of the Passover crowds in Jerusalem are like a powder keg ready for a spark—filled to the brim with both messianic fervor and hatred of Roman rule. (Kostenberger, Final Days)
- ii) He has **temporarily frustrated the plans** of the Sanhedrin, who plan to arrest and execute Him but cannot do so because of His current popularity.
  - (1) This temporary superficial popularity by the crowd serves to temporarily protect Jesus from the Jewish leadership.

## 2) Palm Sunday, the Triumphal Entry—March 29, 33 AD

- a) Jesus enters Jerusalem as the promised and long-awaited Messiah (Matt. 21:1-11, 14-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:9-19)
  - i) Jesus's arrival fulfills three OT prophecies: (Bookman)
    - (1) Zechariah 9:9—the *manner* of His presentation (on a donkey)
      - (a) Not a war horse, but rather imitating King Solomon (1 Kings 1:33).
      - (b) Note how the donkey has already been prepared.
    - (2) Daniel 9:25-26—the *moment* of His presentation (the exact day)
      - (a) 173,880 days from 444 BC and Artaxerxes decree to rebuild Jerusalem.
    - (3) Psalm 118:21-29—the *meaning* of His presentation (as Savior)
      - (a) Hosanna! Save us now!
  - ii) The Jewish Passover pilgrims praise Jesus. (Matt. 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38)
    - (1) News of His arrival spreads through the whole city. (Matt. 21:10-11)
  - iii) The Pharisees, those who control the synagogues, condemn Jesus for receiving their praise. (Luke 19:39-40)
  - iv) Jesus weeps for the city (Luke 19:41-44)
- b) Jesus enters the temple, healing many people, and is criticized by the Sadducees, those who control the temple. (Matt. 21:10-11, 14-16; Mark 11:11)
- c) Jesus quietly returns to Bethany to the east of Jerusalem to rest up for Monday. (Matt. 21:17; Mark 11:11)
  - i) What occurs on Monday?
    - (1) Jesus curses the fig tree, clears out the temple, and foretells His death.
  - ii) What will the Jewish leaders do now? Jesus has thrown down the gauntlet/drawn a line in the sand (so to speak).
  - iii) As Kostenberger says, it is hard to overestimate the political and religious volatility incited by Jesus' actions.

## 3) Things to remember:

- a) What type of Jesus are WE waiting for?
- b) What will WE do with this Jesus?