

## Discussion Guide: Saddam & Palm Sunday

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 (NIV)*

**April 13, 2003:** "Saddam & Palm Sunday" by Pastor Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor College Park Church. Pastor presented the similarity to what is happening today in the ancient land of Babylon (Iraq) with the events that took place in Old and New Testament times.

As the coalition forces quickly brought the regime of Saddam Hussein to an end we witnessed scenes of celebration as people rejoiced in the streets and tore down the statues of Saddam throughout the land. This, unfortunately, was followed by chaos and looting as the people, released from the thumb of dictatorial control, began acting in unrestrained freedom. However, such behavior was predictable.

The similarity of today's events are seen in the times of the Judges when...

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit. Judges 21:25 (NIV)

In Proverbs 29:18 we learn that...

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law. Proverbs 29:18 (NIV)

By way of contrast in the clash of cultures, it is interesting to hear Iraqi POW's express their gratitude for the way they are treated by the American forces, as one remarked, "I've never been treated with such respect in all my life."

What a remarkable testimony to the Judao Christian ethics. Sure we have had our problems down through history, but today in this situation, it is a testimony to the powerful influence of our faith in the living God vs. the faith of others in other gods. This gives testimony to the fact that all religions are not the same. There are significant differences.

With all these differences however, there is one common theme, and that is how quickly people can and do change their behavior. For example, consider the similarity of today's events to the time of Christ when Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. What a triumphant day it was when...

A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" Matthew 21:8-9 (NIV)

And before the week was out the crowds yelled...

"Crucify him!" "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" Matt 27:22-23 (NIV)

This behavior was not a surprise to Jesus, because he knew man's true heart and was cautious in his acceptance of them.

Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man. John 2:23-25 (NIV)

Pastor cautioned us to, in like manner, be cautious when we are praised by others. Accept it graciously, but be on your guard. For people can turn quickly in their behavior and curse you when things don't go as they expect.

Troubles along this line seem to come when we take our eyes off pleasing God and focus on pleasing our fellow man.

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe. Proverbs 29:25 (NIV)

Remember in Elder Robert DeBruin's prayer this morning, it is not about us Lord, it's all about you. Not our will, but your will be done. Remember also that...

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. Proverbs 1:7 (NIV)

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Why do large groups of people often times do things they normally would not do and end up in destructive behavior? Have you ever been in such a group? What was it like?
- What are the differences between such destructive groups and those that behave peacefully.
- Have you experienced the range of changing behavior of others from praise to cursing? What happened? How did you handle the situation?
- What might we do to prepare ourselves so that we might respond more appropriately when such changes in behavior occur?