

## When the Cheering Stopped

by Mike Tucker \*

**G**ene Smith, a noted American historian, wrote the book, "When The Cheering Stopped." The book was the story of President Woodrow Wilson and the events leading up to and following WWI. When that war was over, Wilson was an international hero. There was a great spirit of optimism abroad, and people actually believed that the last war had been fought and the world had been made safe for democracy.

On his first visit to Paris after the war Wilson was greeted by cheering mobs. He was actually more popular than France's own heroes. The same thing was true in England and Italy. In a Vienna hospital, a Red Cross worker had to tell the children that there would be no Christmas presents because of the war and the hard times. The children didn't believe her. They said that President Wilson was coming, and they knew that everything would be all right.

The cheering lasted about a year. Then it gradually began to stop. Political leaders in Europe were more concerned with their own agendas than they were a lasting peace. Wilson ran into opposition at home in the United States, and his League of Nations was not ratified. In the next election, his party was defeated. Under the strain of it all, the President's health began to break. So it was that Woodrow Wilson, a man who had so recently been heralded as the new world Messiah, came to the end of his days a broken and defeated man.

It's a sad story, but one that is not altogether unfamiliar. The ultimate reward for someone who tries to translate ideals into reality is apt to be frustration and defeat. There are a few exceptions, of course, but not many.

It happened that way to Jesus. When he emerged on the public scene he was an overnight sensation. He would try to go off to be alone and the people would still follow him. The masses lined the streets as he came into town. On Palm Sunday leafy palm branches were spread before him and there were shouts of Hosanna. In shouting Hosanna, the throng was in effect saying, "Save us now!" Great crowds came to hear him preach. A wave of religious expectation swept the country.

But the cheering did not last for long. There came a point when the tide began to turn against him. His critics began to publicly attack him. That was something

new. Earlier they had been afraid to speak out for fear of the masses, but they began to perceive that the fickle public was turning on him. Soon the opposition began to snowball. When they discovered that they could not discredit his moral character, they began to take more desperate measures. Before it was all over, a tidal wave welled up that brought Jesus to his knees under the weight of a cross.

Unlike Wilson, Jesus did not die a broken man. He died in triumph, for the end of his story was written long before his life on earth began. It was for this purpose that Jesus came to earth. He knew His popularity would not last, His ideas would be rejected, and the cheers would turn into jeers. But He chose to endure the unendurable for you.

The cheering stopped for Jesus, but soon it will begin again. And this time, when the cheering resumes, it will never stop! Throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity we will praise the One who sacrificed so much for us!

With Love,  
Mike

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