

## Sermon: 2020/04/05 (Palm Sunday) - Matthew 21:1-15 & 46\_BTR

The (Holy) Bible is a *very* long read, isn't it?

Mine - the one I'm holding in my hand, here - has two *thousand* pages.

It consists of *thirty-nine*, books; and - together - between them - they contain - almost - a *million* words! [Pause.]

At least thirty-three (different) nations are mentioned by name, and its message concerns the *whole* world.

In it we hear about the lives and deaths of *innumerable* people over many, many, *many* centuries - from the time of the Neolithic period *right* through to the very end of history; the future.

*And yet*, despite *all* this (massive) content, these things - palm-branches [wave] - are only mentioned *twice*.

That's it.

Just a single pair of references.

Now, one of those "references" - the second of the two - is in (the Book of) *Revelation*, which consists of a series of (seven) letters by the Evangelist John, the "beloved disciple," written on Patmos, followed by a dream-journey he took up to "Heaven," and into God's throne-room itself.

And do you know what he sees there?

*(It's pretty amazing!)*

He "sees there"; he discovers - and I quote - 'a large crowd with more people than could be counted. They were from every race, tribe, region, and language, and they [were standing around Jesus]. They wore white robes and held *palm-branches* in their hands, [and they were] cheering and shout[ing], "Hooray! Praise our Lord who] has the power to save [H]is people': [Rev. 7:9-10].

It was a really *fantastic* thing to see.

Inspiring.

Hopeful.

*Transformative*.

So, here's my question to you: "Does this scene - this "picture" - from *Revelation* sound somewhat...familiar (to you)?"

Does it sound similar to another, *earlier* moment from Jesus' life?

[Wait for response.]

*Right.*

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which we commemorate today.

In fact, the two incidences sound close to being identical!

Is that significant?

Hm?

What do you think?

Yes.

And why?

What is the importance of that moment; of the palm-branch waving outside of Jerusalem?

And it's similarity to what John saw in Heaven?

It's significance, among other things, is that, *for a brief moment*, it was, in ancient Israel, Heaven. On. Earth.

Let me rephrase that:

It's significance is that when the 'crowd' gathered to welcome Jesus into their city, and waved their palm-branches, they were, *unknowingly*, offering a glimpse - a prediction - of the future.

A "foretaste" of what true Christians - "the Elect" - can look forward to when Jesus returns; which is of an endless, *joyful* party.

And what do you notice?

Well, you and I - we - get so excited by technology and gadgets - by the latest iPads and iPhones.

But none of this is mentioned as being present at God's party.

There are people like us - which is promising.

(That can be you and me.)

And, *additionally*, we're offered a sign of His *wider* creation:

The "palm-branches," you see, don't "pop" into existence!

They come from palm-trees, which is *more* great news:

that - and here's my point, beyond death, there is natural beauty;

that, beyond death, there will be animals and plants and flowers, and all these things must matter, then, to our Creator; and He has, it seems, *filled* His throne-room with them - for *His* enjoyment and for the enjoyment of those who get to live with Him forever.

Let's pray: ....