

Remnant Life Church
April 10, 2022
Palm Sunday
The Coming of a King
Mark 11:1-11

Today is Palm Sunday

- On the church calendar it holds a great deal of significance
 - It marks the final week of the season of Lent which concludes on Good Friday
 - It marks the beginning of the last week of Jesus' earthly life known as Holy Week or The Passion
 - And it is the day that Jesus entered into Jerusalem as their King

How this time of the year, culminating with next Sunday, came to be known as Easter is uncertain

- The 8th century English monk Bede wrote that the name derives from the word *Eostre*, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility
- Given the early church's aversion to anything pagan, there is a growing belief that the origin lies in the Latin *in albis* which became *eostarum* in the Old High German language, or *ostern* in modern German, which became a precursor to the English *easter*.

There are many customs leading up to Easter Sunday, none of which have anything to do with the church

- Colored eggs – most likely an extension of the fertility rites, a hold-over from the pagan celebrations
- There is the Easter Bunny similar to Santa Clause for Christmas in its spiritual significance
- Of course, there is a lot of candy
 - Chocolate
 - Jellybeans
 - Marshmallow Peeps – 700 million peeps sold during the season
 - Second only to chocolate
 - 200 million at my house alone
 - More candy is purchased and consumed than at any other time of the year with the exception of Halloween

READ – **Mark 11:1-11** (Miles Saksek)

Palm Sunday is important for many reasons

- Of special note is that it brings Jesus to Jerusalem
 - His disciples were encouraging Him not to go
 - He clearly shows His intent and resolve
- Jesus' entry is recorded in all four of the Gospels (**Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19**)
 - Very unusual that all four include a particular event
 - Only miracle of Jesus in all four is the feeding of the 5000

The setting is actually a pretty chaotic one

- There are thousands and thousands of people in and around the city of Jerusalem
- It is Passover
 - Why did this event take place every year?
 - It's origin...
 - *Ex 9:12-13 - On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.*
 - This was the final miracle of Israel's deliverance from slavery and the bondage of Egypt
 - Who determined that the night of the death angel passing over should be remembered and recognized every year?
 - *Ex 12:14 - This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.*
 - God decreed that the day should never be forgotten
 - Why was this time significant regarding the life and ministry of Jesus?
 - *Matt 26:2 – Passover being in two days, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified*
 - He knew that the time had come for Him to fulfill and complete the reason He had come to live among men

We have looked in years past at the symbolism of what was taking place during this time

- Because this was far than just some interesting things going on that we have never experienced
- All that was taking place was the fulfillment of centuries old prophecies regarding the life and death of Jesus
 - *Zech 9:9 – Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*
 - This prophecy was written 500 years before Jesus was born
- The donkey, as we know, was not only the fulfillment of this prophecy, but to the people it also represented royalty as seen in the OT (*I Kings 2:40*)

Why did Jesus choose to come into the city this way?

- Because it marked a dramatic shift in the emphasis of His ministry
- In *Matt 12* we read of the man with the deformed hand being healed by Jesus
- In the *14th to 16th* verses we read, *But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. And He warned His disciples not to tell others about him.*
- But now, the time had come for them to see who He truly was, yet they still did not understand
- It is interesting to note that Jesus' entire earthly ministry was marked by people who did not, would not, or could not understand what He was teaching or who He was
 - His disciples

- The religious leaders
- And now the people

If you look back in the history of Jerusalem, there were those who had made many attempts to lead the people in an effort to escape the oppression and rule of other empires

- Most were little more than skirmishes that were quickly squashed and the leaders executed
- But in 167 BC an uprising occurred to throw off the Seleucid (or Greek) rule over Israel that had been established following the death of Alexander the Great
- It was led by Judas Maccabee and after 3 years of battle, the city of Jerusalem was retaken
- When Maccabee and his army entered the city on horseback, the people spread their cloaks as well as palm branches on the road in front of them
- When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the people who knew their ancestor's history, believed that He had come to do the very same thing and free them from their oppressors
- But Jesus was coming, not to free them from the Romans, but to free them from the bondages of sin

But what is it about the palm branches?

- Was there more significance to this or was it simply a case of using what was available or of the people believing that this was a welcomed and familiar historical event getting ready to repeat itself?
- I can assure you that, like the donkey, and everything else about Jesus' life, there was specific and important meaning in all that was being done

First of all, you will find palm trees and palm branches in the Scripture from **Exodus** all the way through to **Revelation**

- In the OT palm trees were associated with comfort, rest, and even provision
 - In **I Kings 6:29** we read this regarding Solomon's temple; *On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers*
- In early Christianity, palm branches signified goodness and victory
 - In John's book of the **Revelation** we read that every nation will raise palm branches to honor Jesus
 - **Rev 7:9** - *After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.*
- You see, the people believed on that first Palm Sunday that they were welcoming a conquering prophesied hero sent by God!

But when they quickly saw, in His arrest and beatings, that Jesus was not going to free them from the Romans, they turned on Him

- This presents us with a clear truth regarding the human condition
 - Man is sinful in his heart and very deceptive
- And until the heart is changed, the actions will not
 - This is not only true of the non-believer but the Christian as well

- It is foolish and perhaps vain for a man or a woman to believe that, if they are a Christian, they need not be concerned about the condition of their heart, or their associated actions
- The sin nature remains even though it is under the headship of the Holy Spirit in our lives
- This is what Paul is writing about in **Romans 7:15** - *I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.*
- We must continually be willing to examine our lives in order to submit all aspects of our lives to Him
- And it is this time of year that so clearly brings into focus and perspective our need for Him as we more closely examine what Jesus did for each and every one of us.

The palm branches were being waved to welcome a coming King

- But the people were looking for the wrong type of King
- Who are you looking for this Palm Sunday 2022?
 - Are you looking for the king of your life for what He will do for you?
 - To free you from financial struggles?
 - To ease the troubles you may be experiencing?
 - Or are you seeking Him with the heart of a servant that only wants to live for Him without stipulations, without your own plans, and without your own wants?
 - That is not always easy, but it is the mark of a man or woman who is looking to welcome the right and true King of their lives.