

Imagine yourself... among the bystanders at the entrance of Jerusalem...around the year 33...as an itinerant rabbi/teacher/preacher & healer...with a small band of disciples...make their way into Jerusalem. Over the past three years he had become known throughout the area, and messianic expectations of him had been rising. Now a crowd had gathered to greet *Jesus*, prepared to lay palm branches across the road before him in messianic expectation, welcoming him with great hopes that he would be the One to bring the “coming kingdom of our ancestor [King] David”.

And yet... the terrible conflict and sorrows...that would follow in the week ahead hardly resembled anything of messianic glory. *But then...* by the end of the week, the story of Jesus became **far stranger than anything anyone could have ever imagined.**

Who could have imagined... on that first “Palm Sunday”...that everyone there that day were *witnesses* of the beginning of a week that would become **a pivotal moment** in the **history of the world...** and **the pivotal moment in the experience of God** in western civilization?

Who could have imagined... that from that week...would emerge **a new religion...** that would eventually become the religion of the very same Roman Empire that had crucified Jesus for treason...a new religion of a new way of seeing God and the world...that would begin a continuing shift in the human imagination?

Who could have imagined... that from that week...would come the widespread creation of hospitals and hospices, the founding of schools, shelters for widows and orphans, relief organizations, soup kitchens, medical missions, charitable aid societies—and, later, the building of cathedrals and universities—all across the world?

Who could have imagined... then...that two thousand years later...**you and I...** would be gathered in this place...a *place* completely unknown to them then...speaking a *language* completely unknown to them....and telling the *story* of what happened to that very same Jesus...who rode into Jerusalem on that day?

Who could have imagined? Well, no one could have.

And, truth be told, we sometimes can have our own moments...sitting in church...and have a feeling...of just how unexpected and strange this whole story is...this story of Jesus that we keep re-telling. And if we had a lapse of historical memory, we could wonder...*just why are we doing this?*

But we are here...because we are returning again to this pivot point in world history. And very likely, at some point in our past, something about this story became a part of our lives. Or the time is yet to come. But we are never finished with this story. Because *this story is not finished with us.*

The familiar sin and terrors of humankind are on full display in this story of Jesus. But so is something else that is...*wonderful.*

Now we can begin to imagine...that when we least expect it...the world can turn on a dime...and not just the sad and sudden losses of which history and our lives are full of...but also the *wonderfully unimaginable...* from the *wonderfully unimaginable God of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Nothing is finished just yet...not the world...not you and I.

There is still much to come...from this God.