

Sometimes it is the smallest detail that gives it away. The clues are right there in front of your face if only you were paying attention, but you weren't because your eyes were on the the bigger picture so you don't notice the fleeting cameo role, the walk on part that gave the plot away. Sometimes the bible is like that. Most of the time it's not because most of the time it's been written to ram home the point in the clearest way possible. But when there's something really big going on in the story- a last supper for example, or a triumphal entry, or a passion and a crucifixion, something which could tell us a lot simply, slips by.

And of course we are not in any shape or form the readers the original writers of the Scriptures thought they were writing for. They would have never imagined anyone would be reading their books and letters, their poems and their histories even a hundred years in the future, nevermind thousands. We're two thousand years away from even being born, speaking a wholly different language mostly about largely different things. So sometimes we're even less likely to notice because distance of time and culture have stretched our familiarity breaking point thin.

Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

How many of us noticed? Very few, perhaps none. When we want water, we turn on a tap. We don't have to get a jar and walk to the well. So we don't even notice the utterly incongruous detail in Mark's passion account. But what is outrageous in the account is that it is a man carrying a jar of water. Fetching water, in ancient cultures, as in many around the world to day, is purely women's work. You would no more expect to meet a man in Jerusalem carrying a jar of water than you would one wearing a pink tutu and stilettos. It's utterly wrong, wholly perverse, completely inside out.

You see, already, before the main event has kicked off we can see the world being turned upside down. Of course, if we've been paying attention we will see that this is what Jesus' life and ministry right up to this point is all about.

The king born in a stable.

Tax collectors, prostitutes, sinners the guests of honour at the banquet.

Children welcomed as equals.
Women welcomed as equals.
Outsiders, unclean, pariahs, welcomed as equals.

And it is from this point onwards, as we enter into the story of Holy Week that topsy turvy takes over.

The ecstatic Palm Sunday, the Good Friday lynch mob.
The Creator of the Universe crowned with thorns.
The judge of all judged by humanity and condemned to death.
The giver of all life killed on a cross.

In this Holy Week we are hurtling at speed toward the centre of history. By the time we judder to a halt at 3 pm on Good Friday we will no longer have a clue where we are, what is up, what is down, we will no longer know right from wrong. Our world will truly have been turned upside down.

And when we emerge blinking our eyes in the sunlight of Easter morning, the old world will have gone. Our whole world, down to it's last atom, will have been transformed.

When we see a man carrying water, how natural that will seem.

And then we will understand that it was our old world that was really the wrong way round.