

MARK 11.1-19

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM (Matthew 21.1-11; Luke 19.28-40; John 12.12-19)

¹Jesus and his disciples reached Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives. When they were getting close to Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of them on ahead. ²He told them, "Go into the next village. As soon as you enter it, you will find a young donkey that has never been ridden. Untie the donkey and bring it here. ³If anyone asks why you are doing that, say, 'The Lord ^a needs it and will soon bring it back.'" ⁴The disciples left and found the donkey tied near a door that faced the street. While they were untying it, ⁵some of the people standing there asked, "Why are you untying the donkey?" ⁶They told them what Jesus had said, and the people let them take it.

⁷The disciples led the donkey to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on its back, and Jesus got on. ⁸Many people spread clothes on the road, while others went to cut branches from the fields. ^b ⁹In front of Jesus and behind him, people went along shouting,

"Hooray! ^c God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰God bless the coming kingdom of our ancestor David. Hooray for God in heaven above!"

¹¹After Jesus had gone to Jerusalem, he went into the temple and looked around at everything. But since it was already late in the day, he went back to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

JESUS PUTS A CURSE ON A FIG TREE (Matthew 21.18,19)

¹²When Jesus and his disciples left Bethany the next morning, he was hungry. ¹³From a distance Jesus saw a fig tree covered with leaves, and he went to see if there were any figs on the tree. But there were not any, because it wasn't the season for figs. ¹⁴So Jesus said to the tree, "Never again will anyone eat fruit from this tree!" The disciples heard him say this.

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE (Matthew 21.12-17; Luke 19.45-48; John 2.13-22)

¹⁵After Jesus and his disciples reached Jerusalem, he went into the temple and began chasing out everyone who was selling and buying. He turned over the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those who were selling doves. ¹⁶Jesus would not let anyone carry things through the temple. ¹⁷Then he taught the people and said, "The Scriptures say, 'My house should be called a place of worship for all nations.' But you have made it a place where robbers hide!" ¹⁸The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses heard what Jesus said, and they started looking for a way to kill him. They were afraid of him, because the crowds were completely amazed at his teaching. ¹⁹That evening, Jesus and the disciples went outside the city.

Notes (Guzik)

(1-6) PREPARATION FOR THE ENTRY.

1. Now when they drew near to Jerusalem: If all we had were the gospel of Mark, we might think this is Jesus' first journey to Jerusalem. But the gospel of John tells us of many previous trips. Jesus, like any devout Jewish man, went to Jerusalem for as many of the major feasts as He possibly could.
2. At the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples: As Jesus prepares to enter Jerusalem, He carefully and deliberately sends His disciples to make arrangements for His coming into the city. Since the time is short before His crucifixion, Jesus leaves nothing to chance.
3. You will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat: With this, Jesus established that He would enter Jerusalem riding on a colt. He deliberately chose a young horse, not a stallion, not a donkey, not coming on foot. This is because in that day, to come riding a colt - as opposed to a mighty war-horse - was to come as a man of peace. Jesus didn't come to Jerusalem as a conquering general, but as a suffering - though triumphant - servant.
4. The Rabbis of Jesus' day had several different theories regarding how the Messiah would come to Jerusalem. Based on Daniel 7:13, some thought the Messiah would come as a majestic conqueror. Based on Zechariah 9:9, some thought that the Messiah would come in a lowly and humble way, riding on a colt.
5. In the days of Jesus, some Rabbis reconciled these by saying that the Messiah would come humbly to an *unworthy* Israel, but mightily to a *worthy* Israel. Since Israel considered itself worthy, they only looked for a triumphant, conquering Messiah.
6. On which no one had sat: "To Jesus it made no difference that this was an unbroken colt. He was the Creator come into this scene as a Man, and as such all the lower creatures were subject to Him." (Ironsides)
7. They spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go: Apparently, Jesus had pre-arranged this with the colt owner, and the disciples were just instructed to say, "It's for Jesus" if they were questioned. They did as Jesus said, and it was fine

(7-11) PRAISE FOR JESUS

8. We like this slice from the life of Jesus because it simply *feels* so right. For much of Jesus' ministry, He was despised and rejected of men. Often the adoring crowds followed Him only for what they could *get* from Him, and most His audience rejected any kind of personal commitment to Jesus. It was all different on this day.
9. On this day, they lavished attention and honor on Jesus, using their clothes as a saddle for Jesus, using their clothes as a red carpet for the colt He rode on. Considering the expense and value of clothing in that day, this was generous praise.
10. If Jesus were among us, would He receive a critical evaluation, or would He receive generous praise? It's even more important to understand that Jesus *is here* among us.
11. Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" For most of His ministry, Jesus did everything He could to discourage people from publicly celebrating Him as the Messiah. Here, Jesus goes out of His way to invite public praise and adoration as the Messiah.
12. In fact, when the religious leaders of His day objected, He told them "*I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.*" (Luke 19:40)
13. These statements from the crowd come from Psalm 118:19-29. In this, their praise was *Scriptural*. It's important that we praise God *as He wants to be praised*. So if God says we are to come to Him with words (Hosea 14:2), then that is how we come. If God says we are to come to Him with song (Psalm 100:2), that is how we come. If God says we are to come to Him with hands raised up (Psalm 134:2), that is how we come. The whole point in worship is to do what pleases God, not what pleases us, but the beautiful truth is that when we please God, we find ourselves wonderfully pleased.

14. Why did Jesus want to be praised? It was not for His sake; it isn't that Jesus has a self-esteem problem and needs our affirmation. Jesus wants to be praised because *we need* to praise Him. God *will* get His praise, and He invites us to be a part of it.
15. We call this event the "Triumphal Entry," but it was a strange kind of triumph. If you spoke of Jesus' "Triumphal Entry" to a Roman, they would have laughed you in the face. For them, a Triumphal Entry was a honor granted to a Roman general who won a complete and decisive victory, and had killed at least 5,000 enemy soldiers. When the general returned to Rome, they had an elaborate parade. First came the treasures captured from the enemy, then the prisoners. His armies marched by unit by unit, and finally the general rode in a golden chariot pulled by magnificent horses. Priests burned incense in his honor and the crowds shouted his name and praised him. The procession ended at the arena, where some of the prisoners were thrown to wild animals for the entertainment of the crowd. *That* was a "Triumphal Entry," not a Galilean Peasant sitting on a few coats set out on a pony.
16. When He looked around at all things: Jesus came as the Messiah to Jerusalem, not as a mighty general to conquer the Romans. He came to first to look at the standing of the people of God, and to make an "inspection." In the rest of Mark 11, we see the results of this "inspection."
17. Malachi 3:1-3 speaks prophetically of the Messiah coming to the temple in careful assessment.
18. "The point is rather that Jesus is the Lord of the Temple, who must inspect its premises to determine whether the purpose intended by God is being fulfilled." (Lane)
19. We see again the *courage* of Jesus, because He isn't hiding at all. John 11:57 makes it clear that there was a price on Jesus' head; an "all-points-bulletin" was put out for His arrest. Yet, He came into Jerusalem in the most public way possible.

(12-14) JESUS CURSES A FIG TREE

20. Seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it: Essentially, the tree was a picture of "false advertising," having leaves, but no figs. Ordinarily, this is not the case with these fig trees, which normally do not have leaves without also having figs.
21. For it was not the season for figs: It wasn't that the fig tree didn't have figs, because it wasn't supposed to. The problem is that it *had leaves* but didn't have figs. The leaves said "There are figs here," but the figs weren't there.
22. There were many trees with only leaves, and these were not cursed. There were many trees with neither leaves nor fruit, and these were not cursed. This tree was cursed because it professed to have fruit, but did not.
23. In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again": The tree is cursed for its *pretense* of leaves, not for its *lack* of fruit; like Israel, it has the outward form but no fruit. In this picture, Jesus warned Israel - and us - of God's displeasure when we have the *appearance* of fruit, but not the fruit itself. God isn't pleased when His people are all leaves and no fruit.
24. In all works in the ministry of Jesus, this is the only "destructive" miracle. The Old Testament is filled with miracles of destruction and judgment, but Jesus most perfectly showed us the nature of God. If this was the only miracle of its kind, we must see there is a great and important lesson in it. God doesn't approve when there is profession without reality, talk without walk.
25. Should we criticize Jesus for a lack of environmental concern? Not at all. "There is no more warrant for criticizing our Lord for destroying a tree for the purpose of teaching, that there is for objecting to a Christmas tree for our children, or the plucking of petals from a flower in a lesson on botany." (Morgan)

(15-19) THE TEMPLE CLEANSED

26. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple: What was the problem? Profiteers, in cooperation with the priests, robbed the pilgrims by forcing them to purchase "approved" sacrificial animals and currencies at inflated prices.
27. Every Jewish male had to pay a yearly temple tax - an amount equaling about two days pay. It had to be paid in the currency of the temple, and the money exchangers would change you your money for the temple money, and they did it at outrageous rates.
28. As well, they did this in the outer courts of the temple, the only area where Gentiles could come and pray; therefore, this place of prayer was made into a swap meet, and a dishonest one at that! God intended the temple to be a house of prayer for *all* nations, but they had made it a den of thieves.
29. A den of thieves is a place where thieves associate and hide. It is a sorry, shameful condition when the house of God becomes a place where unrepentant, active sinners can associate and hide.
30. We do love Jesus; and we want to praise Him; yet we must also allow His cleansing presence in our lives. If He wants to turn over some tables in our hearts, so be it.

PERSONAL NOTES

APPLICATION

WHAT SPECIFICALLY WAS THE LORD SAYING TO ME?

WHAT WILL I CHANGE ABOUT MY LIFE AS A RESULT OF GOD'S WORD TO ME?