

# Temple

Mark 11

March 4, 2018

## DAY 1: Palm Sunday

Today, we'll begin our look at the final week of Jesus' earthly life. It begins with what Christians have called "Palm Sunday" or "Triumphal Entry."

*Mark 11:1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples,*

*<sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.*

*<sup>3</sup> If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"*

*<sup>4</sup> They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it,*

*<sup>5</sup> some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?"*

*<sup>6</sup> They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.*

*<sup>7</sup> When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.*

*<sup>8</sup> Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.*

*<sup>9</sup> Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

*<sup>10</sup> "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!"*

*<sup>11</sup> Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.*

1. We are enamored with the scene. Can you picture it in your imagination? What initially strikes you about the scene?

2. When I was a kid I was enamored with the palm branches, people waving them in the air, tossing them in the path of Jesus on His steed, the shouts of "Hosanna!" and "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

3. It has all the earmarks of triumph, victory, vindication, and glory. Well, except that isn't the driving force in this scene, as we think of it.

4. In ancient history, triumphant kings rode into town on beautiful stallions, the symbol of power, pride, honor, authority. Jesus rode in on a young donkey, the symbol of humility, poverty.

5. Why do you think He chose to ride into Jerusalem thusly?

## DAY 2: The prophecy

1. The scene of the triumphal entry portrays a picture of the real purpose of Jesus Christ. He did not come in pride and triumph over enemies, but in humility and mercy for enemies!

2. He did not come as a “conquering” king but as a dying king.

3. This scene was preached about 550 years before this event by Zechariah the prophet.

*Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

4. The mixture of two metaphors in this scene tells us something significant about the identity and purpose of Jesus Christ. It’s as if Jesus is saying, “I am coming as a king, but not the kind of king you’re thinking of.”

5. Jesus Christ is regularly portrayed as someone unlike us. He is:

a. Powerful, yet meek.

b. Loving, yet firm.

c. He is a “Type A” regarding His purpose, yet tender with children.

d. He is a leader, yet a servant.

e. Beginning a movement, yet not into “marketing” Himself.

f. The point of all things, yet not a “self-promoter.”

6. This rich mix of metaphors is richly, and most famously used by John in the book of Revelation. He sees the resurrected Christ in heaven. Here is one of those scenes:

*Revelation 5:5 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."*

7. An elder engages John in conversation. He tells John not to weep. Why is there no reason to weep?

8. The elder tells John that Jesus, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” has triumphed. The elder has John’s verbal attention. But then John turns to see what the elder sees.

*Revelation 5:6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

9. Behold! The second image, the unexpected one! The lamb that was slain!

10. Something like this is going on, on what we call Palm Sunday!

### DAY 3: What's up with that fig tree?

1. Following the entry into Jerusalem, Jesus went to the temple. What He saw in the temple was heart-breaking, and maddening. There was not enough time that day to act. He would be back the next day.

2. We pick up the story on the next morning.

*Mark 11:12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.*

*<sup>13</sup> Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.*

*<sup>14</sup> Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.*

3. What's your first impression about Jesus and His dealings with this fig tree?

4. Something was dreadfully wrong with the fig tree that was completely unexpected. It was diseased, resulting in fig tree *leaves* but not fig tree *fruit*—figs, created to be edible for people.

5. Seeing this fig tree in this unnatural condition reminded Him of what He had seen in the temple the day before.

6. The fig tree also reminded Him of the nation of Israel as a whole. The nation was a nation of leaves and no fruit. There was "religion" everywhere: sacrifices, the temple, prayer, giving, obeying manmade rules, "playing at religion" without the life of God. Israel, a nation that should have been *fruit*-bearing for all the nations had become absorbed with "*leaf*-bearing," instead.

7. It's very easy for us to be leaf-bearing instead of fruit-bearing. Fruit-bearing requires we abide in the vine of Christ.

*John 15:5 (RSV) I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

8. Abiding in Christ involves obeying His commands, and drawing your resources and life from Him. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 4: Cleansing the temple: house of prayer

1. Jesus walks into the temple area, the outer area called the court of the Gentiles. It is the place where the Gentiles are allowed to go to worship the God of the bible. There's a big problem. That's impossible to do, given what's going on there!

2. Over the years, the outer court had turned into a market where worshippers could purchase animals for their sacrifice—lambs, birds, etc.

3. And, since Jewish people were coming back to Jerusalem from foreign lands, a currency-exchange industry had cropped up.

4. So, where should the animals and money-changers ply their trades? The decision was to cede over the court of the Gentiles. How does that decision strike you? What does it say about their attitudes toward the Gentiles?

*Mark 11:15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,*

*<sup>16</sup> and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.*

*<sup>17</sup> And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: "'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"*

*<sup>18</sup> The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.*

5. What are the problems Jesus sees in this scene? Look for at least four problems.

6. One of the problems is that what should have been a house of prayer had been turned into a circus.

7. In this scene Jesus quotes God, as written from Isaiah.

*Isaiah 56:7 "... these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."*

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 5: Cleansing the temple: God's heart for all people

*Mark 11:15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,*

<sup>16</sup> *and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.*

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<sup>18</sup> *The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.*

1. Yesterday, we looked at Jesus cleansing the temple because it was no longer a house of prayer. Today, we look at the other half of His reasoning for cleansing the temple:

*"My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'?"*

2. The heart of God was always for all nations.

3. God's covenant that He made with Abraham, was ultimately for this purpose, to reach all nations, all peoples.

*Genesis 12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.*

<sup>2</sup> *"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.*

<sup>3</sup> *I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

4. Jesus quotes from Isaiah 56.

*Isaiah 56:5 ... to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.*

*Isaiah 56:6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—*

*Isaiah 56:7 ... these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."*

5. The Jewish people had written off the Gentile people as spiritually hopeless, instead of seeing the heart of God for lost people, everywhere.

6. Is God trying to give you a heart for lost people?