

## Mark 11:1-19 ~ Scripture Verses

### *The Triumphal Entry*

<sup>1</sup> 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![a]”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”[b]

<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.

### *Jesus Clears the Temple*

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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’[c]?

But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’[d]”

<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.

<sup>19</sup> When evening came, they went out of the city.

### Footnotes:

a. Mark 11:9 – A Hebrew expression meaning “Save!” which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 10

b. Mark 11:9 – Psalm 118:25,26

c. Mark 11:17 – Isaiah 56:7

d. Mark 11:17 – Jeremiah 7:11

## Mark 11:1-19 ~ Discussion Questions

1. What did Jesus tell his disciples to do? What do you think they thought about it? Why an animal the no one had ever ridden? (11:2-3)
2. How did the disciples' experience getting the colt match with what Jesus said would happen? (11:4-6) What do you think they thought about it then?
3. In light of the way Jesus entered Jerusalem, what was the expectation of the people in the crowds? (Zechariah 9:9) Of his disciples (Matthew 19:28)? Of the Jewish leaders? Of Jesus?
4. Was this incident foretold (prophesied)? When and by who? Does that make it more meaningful? (Mark 11:1-11, Zechariah 9:9)
5. Why do we call Jesus' entry into Jerusalem Palm Sunday? (John 12:13)
6. How did Jesus ride into your life? A) As a conquering hero forcing you into submission. B) As a gentle king bringing you peace. C) As a white knight rescuing you. D) As a great prophet on an intellectual basis. E) As a Biblical figure you ought to know about. F) Something else. How do you regard Jesus now?
7. Describe what was going on around the temple. (Mark 11:15-16)
8. Why was Jesus upset about it? (Isaiah 56:6-8, Jeremiah 7:9-15)
9. How did the crowds and religious leaders react to Jesus' actions in the temple? (Mark 11:18)
10. What practices in the church today do you think hinder non-Christians from coming to Christ?
11. Where is God's temple today?
12. Have you ever misunderstood Jesus and his purpose—praising him one day, being dissatisfied another day, calling to him the next, and feeling uneasy with him another time? What causes these different feelings?

## Mark 11:1-19 ~ Leader's Guide

1. What did Jesus tell his disciples to do? What do you think they thought about it? Why an animal the no one had ever ridden? (11:2-3, Numbers 19:2, Deut 21:3)

Jesus told his disciples they would find a colt (of a donkey) tied up just at the entry to the village, that it had never been ridden, and to bring it to him. He also told them exactly what to tell anyone who asked what they were doing.

I can't imagine what the disciples must have thought: "How does Jesus know where a donkey will be tied up? How does he know it hasn't been ridden? How can he expect the owner to let us take the animal with such a lame excuse? We're going to be arrested. This is *not* a good mission. When Jesus said, "follow me," I didn't know we'd be stealing donkeys for him. What did I get myself into?"

Unused animals that no one had ridden before were regarded as especially suitable for religious purposes and animals that had not been previously yoked were required by the law given by the Lord to Moses for many religious ceremonies.

2. How did the disciples' experience getting the colt match with what Jesus said would happen? (11:4-6) What do you think they thought about it then?

Events unfolded in exactly the way that Jesus said they would. The colt was tied up where he said it would be; it was one that hadn't been ridden; when questioned, they answered as Jesus told them to and the people let them go.

Jesus had done miracles, healed people and even brought several back to life, cast out demons, preached *very different* sermons, told parables, and now he was forecasting the future with uncanny accuracy. The disciples could not have helped being amazed and astonished.

3. In light of the way Jesus entered Jerusalem, what was the expectation of the people in the crowds? (Zechariah 9:9) Of his disciples (Matthew 19:28)? Of the Jewish leaders? Of Jesus?

The people clearly saw Jesus as the king that would restore Jerusalem and the Jewish nation to greatness and free them from oppression. For the past 450 years, the nation had been successively dominated by the Persians, Ptolemies of Egypt, Seleucids of Syria, and, finally, an expanding Roman empire. This view was reinforced by the way he entered the city as prophesied by Zechariah. The people greeted him as one coming in the name of the Lord and of "our father, David."

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.

Although Jesus had told his disciples three times what awaited him, they still seemed to focus on the positive promises in Matthew 19:28 and bickered among themselves who was the greatest and who deserved a position of power (9:34, 10:37). So they too still saw Jesus somehow coming to be a king or ruler.

Matthew 19:28 – Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Obviously the Jewish leaders could not help but be incensed by Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah and receiving the plaudits of the people. While he could have entered the city in a low key way, Jesus’ deliberate ceremonious entry was almost designed to provoke the Jewish leaders to take action against him. Which, of course, they did.

Jesus? Obviously, he knew what was coming. He had already told his disciples three times and there was no question in his mind that his time had come.

4. Was this incident foretold (prophesied)? When and by who? Does that make it more meaningful? (Mark 11:1-11, Zechariah 9:9)

Zechariah prophesied sometime before 460 BC early in the period of the restoration (the return to the Holy Land) after the exile of Israel and Judah. The detail in this prophecy nearly a half century earlier is absolutely astounding. Just try to imagine if Michel de Nostredame (Nostradamus) in 1550 (yes, that’s when he lived) had described in detail the inauguration of President Barack Obama that took place in January 2009.

5. Why do we call Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem Palm Sunday? (John 12:13)

John 12:13 – They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna!” etc.

The gospel of John is the only one that reports that palm branches were spread, but that seems to have caught people’s imagination. The three synoptic gospels say only that branches and cloaks were spread. Actually, the word used means “leaves” or “leafy branches,” which were readily available in nearby fields. The palm branches mentioned by John are not native to the area and must have come from Jericho, which is about 15 miles and 6 to 8 hours hard walking from Jerusalem.

The palm branch was a symbol of triumph and victory in Jewish tradition, and is treated in other parts of the Bible as such (Leviticus 23:40).

Though not observed at first, by sometime between 600 and 1000 AD, Palm Sunday was given full treatment, especially by Christians aligned with Rome. This

treatment was part of a growing emphasis at the time to imitate as closely as possible the last days of Christ's life.

6. How did Jesus ride into your life? A) As a conquering hero forcing you into submission. B) As a gentle king bringing you peace. C) As a white knight rescuing you. D) As a great prophet on an intellectual basis. E) As a Biblical figure you ought to know about. F) Something else. How do you regard Jesus now?

7. Describe what was going on around the temple. (Mark 11:15-16)

The city of Jerusalem was situated on a plateau on a low hill. To the east was the Kidron Valley running north and south. Further east were three towns: Bethphage was closest, then Bethany, and Jericho 15 miles away. There were only two gates to the city from the east and the main one entered right into the Temple area, specifically into the Court of the Gentiles, which was the only part of the Temple area where the Gentiles could worship God and gather for prayer.

Pilgrims coming to the Passover Feast needed animals that met the ritual requirements for sacrifice and the vendors set up their animal pens and money tables in the outside courtyard. Pilgrims also needed their money changed into the local currency, which was required for paying the annual temple tax. Also the Mishnah (Jewish scholars' detailed interpretation of Moses' law) required currency from Tyre for some offerings.

Doves were also being sold for the purification of women (Lev 12:6), for the cleansing of those with certain skin diseases (Lev 14:22-23) and other purposes (Lev 15:13-14, 15:28-29). They were also the usual offering of the poor (Lev 5:7).

Mark also notes in 11:16 that the people were using temple court as a shortcut between the city and the main eastern gate rather than going around the much longer ways to the north or south.

8. Why was Jesus upset about it? (Isaiah 56:6-8, Jeremiah 7:9-15)

Interestingly, although Jesus' main ministry was aimed at Jews, the scripture in Isaiah 56:6-8 assured Godly Gentiles that they would be allowed to worship in the temple area. Jesus quotes a verse from this passage. By allowing the Court of the Gentiles to become a noisy, smelly marketplace, the Jewish leaders were interfering with God's promise.

Jesus called it a "den of robbers" (Jeremiah 7:9-15) not only because they took financial advantage of the people but also because they robbed the temple of its sanctity.

Isaiah 56:6-8 – <sup>6</sup> 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—<sup>7</sup> 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.”<sup>8</sup> The Sovereign LORD declares—he who gathers the exiles of Israel: “I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.”

Jeremiah 7:9-15 –<sup>9</sup> “Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known,<sup>10</sup> and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, “We are safe”—safe to do all these detestable things?<sup>11</sup> Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.

<sup>12</sup> “Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel.<sup>13</sup> While you were doing all these things, declares the LORD, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your fathers.<sup>15</sup> I will thrust you from my presence, just as I did all your brothers, the people of Ephraim.’

9. How did the crowds and religious leaders react to Jesus’ actions in the temple? (Mark 11:18)

The religious leaders looked for a way to kill Jesus. They saw Jesus as a threat to their whole way of life. Why? Because the people were listening to him and were amazed at his teaching. Many were heeding his message and some had become his disciples (in addition to the 12 apostles that he selected earlier.)

10. What practices in the church today do you think hinder non-Christians from coming to Christ?

11. Where is God’s temple today?

12. Have you ever misunderstood Jesus and his purpose—praising him one day, being dissatisfied another day, calling to him the next, and feeling uneasy with him another time? What causes these different feelings?