

12

Mark 11

Entering Jerusalem

Up to this point Mark has given a rapid-fire account of Jesus' ministry. The story slows down as Jesus enters his final days. Recently he has revealed himself to his disciples as the Messiah (Christ). He has given them increasingly detailed predictions of what will happen in Jerusalem, headquarters of the Pharisees who are plotting to destroy him. This chapter tells about the events of Sunday, Monday, and part of Tuesday in the week of Jesus' death.

Read Mark 11:1-11

1. What instructions does Jesus give to two of his disciples?

What indicates that Jesus himself is initiating the triumphal entry?

Note: Riding on a colt was the sign of a royal person coming in peace rather than war.

2. How do the people react to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem?

To what do the people look forward (verse 10)?

3. Instead of organizing an overthrow of Rome, which many in the crowd may expect the Messiah to do, what concerns Jesus after he enters Jerusalem?

What pattern do Jesus and the twelve follow each evening (verses 11, 19)?

Why may this be a safety move? See Mark 14:1.

Read Mark 11:12-26

4. What happens on the way back into Jerusalem on the following morning?

Note: This is a difficult paragraph. Some scholars believe it is an enacted parable warning against show (profession) without reality. This may point directly to Israel and the temple worship in particular. Other scholars indicate that though it was not yet the season for full fruit there would be the early crop of green knobs or immature fruit which appear before the leaves if the tree is going to bear fruit later. Travelers sometimes ate this early fruit. Lack of any fruit at this point meant there would be no mature fruit in season. The leaves were a deception.

5. If you had been a witness in the temple, what would you have seen and heard?

What impression do you get of Jesus here?

How would the profiteering in animals and in currency exchange in the temple affect those who come truly desiring to worship God?

6. What reaction is there to Jesus' expression of authority in cleansing the temple?

How do Jesus' actions here compare with the expectations of many that Messiah would exercise political authority?

7. How does the fig tree now conform outwardly to what it is inwardly (verse 20)?
8. What does Jesus teach his disciples about prayer on this occasion?

9. Peter has been impressed with the withering of the fig tree and Jesus says that even mountains are subject to God. Why is it essential that you focus your attention on the greatness of God rather than on the size of your mountains when you pray?
10. Why can you not pray properly with an unforgiving spirit?

Read Mark 11:27-33

11. What issue do the religious leaders raise with Jesus and why (verses 15-17)?
12. Why can't they answer Jesus' question to them about John?

What did John proclaim about Jesus (John 1:19-34)?

How would this have answered their question about the authority of Jesus?

13. What did John's baptism signify (1:4)?

Why is repentance essential as a condition for accepting the authority and lordship of Jesus?

SUMMARY

1. What claim is Jesus making about himself by his actions in Jerusalem?
2. How do you account for the various reactions to Jesus' claim?

CONCLUSION

Mark devotes the remainder of his Gospel to a detailed account of the last week of Jesus' earthly life. Much of the action centers in the temple, and everything Jesus says and does brings almost immediate repercussions. Jesus' triumphal entry and cleansing of the temple illustrate his claims and ultimate purpose.