

# Gospel Gems from Mark



## Chapter 11: The final week begins

The final six of Mark's 16 chapters deal with the very last part of Jesus' redeeming work--his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his suffering, death and resurrection.



### **Gospel Gem #1: The triumphant entry (11:1-11)**

Why did Jesus choose to enter the city riding on a donkey? (see Zechariah 9:9)

What actions of honor did Jesus' disciples and the other people perform?

What is the meaning of the word "Hosanna"? What other words of praise were used that day?

Based on these words, what exciting developments were the crowds probably hoping to see?

What very different appreciation for this event do we have today, as we celebrate it each year on Palm Sunday?



### **Gospel Gem #2: Cleansing the house of God (11:15-19)**

What perhaps surprising action did Jesus take the next day? Why would this situation have developed?

What are several reasons why Jesus would do this? Cf. this note from the *Concordia Self study Bible*: "Isaiah 56:7 [the verse Jesus quotes here] assured godly non-Jews that they would be allowed to worship God in the temple. By allowing the court of the Gentiles to become a noisy, smelly marketplace, the Jewish religious leaders were interfering with God's provision." (p. 1525)

What response did the leaders have to this miracle of Jesus, and why?

What are some important ways in which we apply this story as we organize ministries and events in our churches today?



**Gospel Gem #3: A very strange miracle (11:12-14, 20-25)**

Notice that Mark points out that it was not the season for finding figs on fig trees. How does that shed light on the purpose of Jesus' actions?

What makes this miracle unique among all the miracles of Jesus?

This miracle surrounds the story about cleansing the temple. In that context, what is Jesus seemingly trying to communicate by this action? (You may want to look up **Luke 13:6-9** for a parable of Jesus that is very similar to his actions here)

Interestingly, though, that's not the main thing that Jesus discusses in his comments to the disciples. Instead, he comments on our attitude and faith in prayer.

Are Jesus' words in verse 23 hyperbole (poetic exaggeration)?

What is the larger point he wants to make about faith and prayer?

What further important detail does he add in verse 25?

**Bonus question (if time)**

Why didn't the chief priests want to answer the question about John's baptism (11:27-33)? Why would Jesus have put them in this situation, rather than simply answering their question about the authority he had?

# Gospel Gems from Mark



## Chapter 11: The final week begins - *answer page*

The final six of Mark's 16 chapters deal with the very last part of Jesus' redeeming work--his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his suffering, death and resurrection.



### **Gospel Gem #1: The triumphant entry (11:1-11)**

Why did Jesus choose to enter the city riding on a donkey? (see Zechariah 9:9)

*This was done intentionally to fulfill a very specific prophecy about the Messiah and his coming. The prophecy "gentle and riding on a donkey" indicates that the choice of animal also showed the type of King Jesus would be.*

What actions of honor did Jesus' disciples and the other people perform?

*They spread their cloaks on the road as well as branches cut from nearby trees.*

What is the meaning of the word "Hosanna"? What other words of praise were used that day?

*Literally it means "save, please!" It was used as an expression of praise. The phrase "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" is a quote from Psalm 118, a psalm about the Messiah. They also spoke about "the coming kingdom of our father David."*

Based on these words, what exciting developments were the crowds probably hoping to see?

*For most of those crowds, Jesus' bold entry excited their hopes that he was about to establish an earthly Messianic kingdom. They were hoping for freedom and independence from their Roman overlords, along with great earthly prosperity.*

What very different appreciation for this event do we have today, as we celebrate it each year on Palm Sunday? *We see in it Jesus' determination to fulfill God's Word and take the final steps into the city where he would suffer and die. He truly is our King because he is our Savior. One day we will indeed see the full glory of his reign!*



### **Gospel Gem #2: Cleansing the house of God (11:15-19)**

What perhaps surprising action did Jesus take the next day? Why would this situation have developed? *He cleared the temple of all those who were buying and selling.*

*Because Jerusalem received many pilgrims who needed to offer sacrifices, a system had developed where needed local currency or animals could be purchased right at the temple itself.*

What are several reasons why Jesus would do this? Cf. this note from the *Concordia Self study Bible*:

"Isaiah 56:7 [the verse Jesus quotes here] assured godly non-Jews that they would be allowed to

worship God in the temple. By allowing the court of the Gentiles to become a noisy, smelly marketplace, the Jewish religious leaders were interfering with God's provision." (p. 1525)

***It was a severe distraction for those attempting to worship. In addition, based on Jesus' words actions we can safely conclude that the motive of those working there was greed and profit, even outright dishonesty ("den of robbers"); it was not a genuine attempt to assist those worshipping.***

What response did the leaders have to this miracle of Jesus, and why?

***They began plotting to kill him. Not only were they jealous of his popularity ("the crowds were amazed") but they may well have had their own profits impacted by Jesus' actions.***

What are some important ways in which we apply this story as we organize ministries and events in our churches today?

***We try to be very careful in the way we approach fund-raising in the church. For the most part we try to support our ministries through freewill offerings. On the occasions where we do use "buying and selling" we are careful to do this in ways that do not impact or distract from the experience of weekly worship. We don't want those who worship with us to feel manipulated or harassed by marketing or advertizing in any way.***



### **Gospel Gem #3: A very strange miracle (11:12-14, 20-25)**

Notice that Mark points out that it was not the season for finding figs on fig trees. How does that shed light on the purpose of Jesus' actions? ***He was intentionally using this as a teaching tool for his disciples, not just looking for food.***

What makes this miracle unique among all the miracles of Jesus? ***It was an action that led to death rather than to life! It is noticeable that it is next to Jesus showing anger and destroying the moneychangers' tables--also seemingly uncharacteristic for Jesus.***

This miracle surrounds the story about cleansing the temple. In that context, what is Jesus seemingly trying to communicate by this action? (You may want to look up **Luke 13:6-9** for a parable of Jesus that is very similar to his actions here) ***It seems to symbolize the impending judgment coming on Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders due to their rejection of Jesus. In several places in Scripture God had warned his people of what would happen if they failed to produce the fruit that they had been planted to produce! In that way it also serves as a warning for us today.***

Interestingly, though, that's not the main thing that Jesus discusses in his comments to the disciples. Instead, he comments on our attitude and faith in prayer.

Are Jesus' words in verse 23 hyperbole (poetic exaggeration)?

***That is one way to read them, but realize that we are in fact praying for events that are even more miraculous than moving a mountain: resurrection from the grave and everlasting life. These things, too, we are to pray for without a shadow of a doubt!***

What is the larger point he wants to make about faith and prayer?

*Jesus wants us to pray with total trust in God's promises. When we ask for things that we know are pleasing to God--stronger faith, greater courage, faithfulness in Christian living--we shouldn't wonder whether or not God will grant our requests but should consider them to have been granted as surely as they were asked!*

What further important detail does he add in verse 25?

*Just as he taught in the Lord's prayer, Jesus indicates that forgiving others is a necessary fruit of faith. We should not ask or expect God to forgive us our sins if we are intentionally refusing to forgive another person.*

**Bonus question (if time)**

Why didn't the chief priests want to answer the question about John's baptism (11:27-33)? Why would Jesus have put them in this situation, rather than simply answering their question about the authority he had?

*The chief priests did not believe in John's message or repent of their sins, but they didn't want to attack him because they were afraid of the reaction of many other Jews who had respect for John. Jesus uses this to point out their hypocrisy. If they were true spiritual leaders of the people, they should have been able to uphold the truth. Their failure to do so showed that they were incapable and unqualified to say anything about Jesus and his message. In this way Jesus was trying to lead them to repent!*