

# A WINTER BIBLE STUDY ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Tuesday April 27, 2021: Session 9 - Readings

Jerusalem: "Entry into Jerusalem & The Temple"

Mark 11:1-13:37

## Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, *"Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden, untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.' "* They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, *"What are you doing, untying the colt?"* They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields.

Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, *"Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"*

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

## Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He

### 1. Background: "a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Why was riding a donkey significant to Jesus's entry to Jerusalem?

Jesus instructed his disciples to find a colt that had never been ridden and bring it back to him before he entered Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-3). Matthew and Luke tell us that it was the colt of a donkey. Why a donkey, and one that had not yet been ridden?

Animals that had never been ridden were considered suitable for sacramental purposes, as seen in Numbers 19:2 and Deuteronomy 21:3, in which they were sacrificed to atone for another's sin. In 1 Samuel 6:7, two milk cows that had never been yoked (made to work in labor) were conscripted to pull the ark of the covenant back to Israel. By choosing to ride an animal thus far set apart from common work, Jesus added an element of sacrament and sacredness to his entry to the city.

Though we see the donkey as a lowly animal, in the Middle East it was considered a noble creature. Judges rode on donkeys (Judges 10:4, 2 Sam. 17:23) as well as royalty (2 Sam. 19:26). The donkey also denoted a king approaching in peace (whereas, a king riding a horse was declaring war).

So, Jesus, by riding into Jerusalem on a never-before-ridden donkey, declared himself the Messiah—a savior coming in peace, not to overcome the Romans. He dramatically re-enacted the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9: *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

The people—including the disciples—failed to recognize that he was coming not as a warrior but as the Prince of Peace. Their joyful adulation, while rightly directed at their savior, anticipated the wrong kind of salvation. The people saw in Jesus what they were hoping for, not what he truly was.

said to it, *“May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”* And his disciples heard it.

### **Jesus Cleanses the Temple**

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, *“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”* And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

### **The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree**

In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. Then Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” Jesus answered them, *“Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”*

*“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.”*

### **Jesus’ Authority Is Questioned**

Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him and said, *“By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?”* Jesus said to them, *“I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me.”* They argued with one another, *“If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’*

*But shall we say, ‘Of human origin’?”—they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”*

### **Chapter 12: The Parable of the Wicked Tenants**

Then he began to speak to them in parables. *“A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this scripture: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?”* When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.

### **The Question about Paying Taxes**

Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. And they came and said to him, *“Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?”* But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, *“Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.”* And they brought one. Then he said to them, *“Whose head is this, and whose title?”* They answered, *“The emperor’s.”* Jesus said to them, *“Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s,*

and to God the things that are God's." And they were utterly amazed at him.

### The Question about the Resurrection

Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. There were seven brothers; the first married and, when he died, left no children; and the second married the widow and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; none of the seven left children. Last of all the woman herself died. In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had married her."

Jesus said to them, "Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong."

### The First Commandment

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

### The Question about David's Son

While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet."' David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?" And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

### Jesus Denounces the Scribes

As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

### The Widow's Offering

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

#### **2. Background: What exactly was a 'widow's mite'?**

Jesus observed a poor widow quietly putting her donation into the temple coffers, praising her "mite" over the abundance that the Pharisees ostentatiously poured in. What exactly is a mite? The word is a contraction of "minute," from the Latin "minutum," which is the translation of the Greek word "lepton" — the very smallest copper coin. Two mites made a farthing, or one "kodrantes" (quadrant), i.e., the fourth part of a Roman "as". **How much might a mite be worth?** Two of them together paid a farmworker's wage for about ten minutes' work. The poor widow – the Greek term specifies that she was a pauper – gave both coins. The fact that her donation consisted of two tiny coins is significant. She might have kept back one, but in spite of her extreme poverty she cast in all that she had.

## **Chapter 13: The Destruction of the Temple Foretold**

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.” When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” Then Jesus began to say to them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

### **Persecution Foretold**

“As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

### **The Desolating Sacrilege**

“But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; the one on the housetop must not go down or enter the house to take anything away; the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not be in winter. For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never

will be. And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days. And if anyone says to you at that time, ‘Look! Here is the Messiah!’ or ‘Look! There he is!’—do not believe it. False messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But be alert; I have already told you everything.

### **The Coming of the Son of Man**

“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

### **The Lesson of the Fig Tree**

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

### **The Necessity for Watchfulness**

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”