

Message #39**Mark 11:1-11**

As we come to this chapter, we are in the final part of the Gospel of Mark. In the next six chapters we will see: 1) Christ's final ministry in Jerusalem (Mark 11-13); 2) Christ's final betrayal, suffering and death (Mark 14-15); 3) Christ's resurrection (Mark 16).

Mark's gospel takes a straight line from Galilee to Jerusalem to the cross. Now the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem is a key moment in the life of Christ. He enters Jerusalem clearly recognized as the Messiah and that becomes the basis for what He does in Jerusalem.

He will cleanse the Temple; He will challenge and confront the spiritual leaders; He will publicly debate them and show them to be wicked. He will teach His own disciples about the coming destruction of Jerusalem and will teach them about new Passover that will replace the old Passover. All of this will lead to His arrest, His trials, His crucifixion and His resurrection.

Now everything that happens to Jesus Christ is Divinely orchestrated. Both He and His Father are working out the Sovereign will of God. They are on their own Divine schedule. To begin this final part of the Christological program, it was important that He enter Jerusalem and what we learn here is this:

JESUS' PUBLIC ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM BY RIDING ON A DONKEY PROVES HE IS THE GOD/SAVIOR/MESSIAH/KING.

There is an important contextual connection between what happens here and what happened in that episode with the blind man. We may recall that he was screaming at the top of his lungs that Jesus was the "Son of David" (Mark 10:47). He kept screaming this over and over again. One thing that did was to clearly identify Jesus Christ as the Messiah. So His entrance into Jerusalem as Messiah would be significant.

Now what is amazing about this scene is that even though this turns out to be a major public declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus Himself doesn't specifically proclaim it here. The people just recognized it. God was at work in this moment and people sensed it.

There are four Divine Messianic actions we want to see:

MESSIANIC ACTION #1 – Jesus prepares to enter Jerusalem by acquiring a donkey. 11:1-6

We may remember that Jesus was traveling from Jericho (10:46) to Jerusalem. The text says He was at "Bethphage." No one is certain where this city is. Many assume it was a place located between Bethany and Jerusalem. We do know that there is a village about two miles from Jerusalem whose name is Bethany. It is located on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives (John 11:18).

We learn from John's gospel that this was the hometown of Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha (John 11:1). In fact, Jesus will spend nights at their home in Bethany and then move in and out of the city of Jerusalem.

Now **verse 1** specifically mentions the Mount of Olives, which is directly east of Jerusalem. It rises to 2600 feet above sea level and overlooks the Temple Mount. Zechariah predicts that Jesus will one day stand on this very mountain on the Day of Judgment (**Zech. 14:4**). Ezekiel predicts the same thing (Ezek. 11:23; 43:2).

This reference to the Mount of Olives is important because this clearly connects us to the future prediction of Zechariah, which is very important to this text for this reason.

One of the key predictions of Zechariah was that this King who would one day stand on this mountain in all of His glory would first ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (**Zech. 9:9**). Zechariah predicts that the One who could save would humbly come riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. In fact, there is a prediction that One would eventually come from the Tribe of Judah who would have a connection to a donkey (Gen. 49:9-11). So this reference being near the Mount of Olives was critical.

Now Jesus sent two of His disciples to go to the village ahead of them. We don't know what the village is and we don't know who the two disciples were but that was their assignment. He told them exactly what He wanted them to do:

Assignment #1 - You go to the village opposite you. **11:2a**

The Greek literally reads "you go into the village, the *village* over against you." Now the noun "village" means this was a small country town without any walls. It obviously was located somewhere close on the opposite side of where they were. Now when you live in a small country town, everybody knows everybody. So if you are a stranger coming into a village, you will stand out.

Assignment #2 - When you enter the village you will find a colt tied there. **11:2b**

This is a colt that is specifically qualified by Jesus telling them that this colt is one upon which no one has ever sat or ridden. Obviously if it were tied, it was halter broke, but it had not yet had anyone up on its back.

Assignment #3 - You are to untie the colt and bring it to Me. **11:2c**

You might think, well isn't that stealing? No, He is God. He made this animal (Gen. 1:24). He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps. 50:10). It all belongs to Him. Now the reason why Jesus is requesting this donkey is not because He is so exhausted that He cannot make it into the city. If Bethphage is located near Bethany, Jesus is only about two miles out of the city of Jerusalem.

Jesus was used to walking high up in the mountains. He could easily make this walk without cracking a sweat. **The reason He wants this donkey is to fulfill prophecy. He wants to literally fulfill all Biblical prophecy.**

This is such a critical point of Bible interpretation. The Bible must be interpreted literally. Biblical prophecy is to be interpreted literally. That is exactly how Jesus Christ interpreted it. If God says that one day Israel will be the honored nation of God and will have a Promised Land, we interpret this literally. If God's Word says that every knee will one day bow before Jesus Christ, we interpret that literally. If God's Word says all unbelievers will burn in everlasting fire, we interpret that literally. If God's Word says all believers will go to heaven, we interpret that literally. That is how Jesus interpreted prophecy.

Assignment #4 - If anyone questions you, tell them the Lord needs this donkey. **11:3a**

Now remember this is just a small village. If a couple of strangers go up to a donkey and just start untying it, your first reaction is they are stealing it. These animals were critical not only for transportation, but for farming. To take someone's donkey was a serious crime and still is.

Out west, you could be hung for stealing someone's colt. It is estimated that over 40,000 horses a year are stolen. In 2011, a woman from Arkansas was sentenced to 60 years in prison for stealing 5 horses and some horse equipment. One of the horses was found dead. Whether in Jesus day or our day, taking someone else's colt is serious business.

But Jesus tells them what to do. He gives them specific instructions as to how to handle this if they are challenged. He says, "If anyone questions you" you tell them "The Lord has need of it." That is all you have to say. The Lord needs this donkey. In other words, this donkey is needed for God's service. There are royal implications to this.

When a King came to an area, he could claim temporary rights to an item or person for immediate service (i.e. Mark 15:21; I Sam. 8:16).

Now the "if" clause is 3rd class conditional, meaning this is probable reality. In other words, this will happen. The other thing that is interesting is that the Lord had a "need." It is interesting that I cannot find where the Lord needs us, but He needs the donkey. He needs this donkey to fulfill prophecy. But when it comes to humans who were once made in the image of God, He doesn't need them. **What is stated concerning humans is we need Him as our Savior (i.e. Matt. 9:12; Mark 2:17).**

If you don't commit your life to Jesus Christ, His work will go along just fine without you. You won't lessen His program or alter His prophecy. But you need Him in your life because He is the only one who can save you from your sins.

Now at the end of **verse 3**, Jesus says He will send the donkey immediately back. This may mean that the owner will immediately send the donkey with you or when Jesus is done, He will immediately send it back. If we read the other accounts, it appears to me that Jesus is saying the owners will immediately send it with you.

According to **verse 4**, the disciples went to the village and sure enough they found the colt tied at the door of a house. The colt was not in a corral, but was tied to a door outside in the street.

So the disciples did what they were told. They untied it. So far the plan was going good. What you have is two total strangers untying an animal that doesn't belong to them.

According to **verse 5**, some of the bystanders questioned them about this. Luke says the "owners" questioned them (Luke 19:33). They obviously wondered why a couple of foreign unknowns in the middle of the day would walk up to a donkey that wasn't theirs and untie it and started walking away with it.

Verse 6 says they did just what Jesus told them to do. They said we are taking this donkey because the "Lord" told us that He needs it. The name Lord means He is the Lord God, who has power and authority over everything. This Divine Person told us to come get this donkey.

Look at the end of **verse 6**, the text says they gave them permission. Everything about this donkey business is sovereignly planned and controlled by Jesus Christ. He is the One calling the shots in all of this.

MESSIANIC ACTION #2 – Jesus approaches Jerusalem by riding a donkey. **11:7-10**

Now in these verses there are five actions that occur:

Action #1 - The disciples brought the colt to Jesus. **11:7a**

This is exactly what Jesus had told them to do. They are obeying His Word literally. Don't miss this. They took His Word seriously and obeyed it literally.

Action #2 - The disciples put their coats on the colt. **11:7b**

They obviously did not own any tack. They did not have any saddle, so they used their coats for Jesus to sit on. Now some have suggested that one reason this was done was so that Jesus could be raised high enough on the colt so His feet would not drag on the ground. This was not a full grown donkey. The average full grown donkey is 40 inches tall or about 10 hands high. A colt would be less than this, so one would be close to the ground.

Action #3 - Jesus sat on the colt. **11:7c**

Now let me tell you if you climb on the back of a colt—whether horse or donkey—upon which no man has ever sat, you are in for a rodeo bucking bronco ride. I have actually done this.

We got a horse when it was just a young colt. No one had ever ridden her. So I started working with her and ultimately it became time for me to sling my leg over that colt. It was a scary and intimidating moment.

There has been no ground work done with this animal that we know of except it had been tied up or sacked out. However, no one had ever been on this donkey's back. Jesus is the first one to get on this donkey's back. Jesus just climbs right up on the back of this animal and He rode it straight into town.

Action #4 - Many people spread their coats and palm branches on the road. **11:8**

This is a sign of great coronation of a King. They were giving Jesus the "red carpet" treatment here. When Jehu, who was a great righteous King, was anointed king of Israel, people spread their garments under his feet (II Kings 9:1-13).

Jesus Christ is the King of Righteousness and they are spreading their garments under His feet.

Action #5 - Many went in front of Him and behind Him identifying Him. **11:9-10**

Jesus and the donkey were surrounded by people in front of Him and behind Him. The people were verbally shouting out some key things:

(Message #1) - They were shouting out Hosanna. **11:9a**

This word is closely connected to the idea that this is the one who can save us. Actually the word means "save now." This is a praise prayer that wants Him to deliver and save them now.

(Message #2) - They were shouting out Jesus is blessed who has come in the name of the Lord. **11:9b**

These people knew He came with the full authority of God. They knew He had come from heaven in the name of the Lord.

(Message #3) - They were shouting out that Jesus is the One who brings the Davidic Kingdom. **11:10a**

These people knew He was the Davidic King.

(Message #4) - They were shouting out Hosanna in the highest. **11:10b**

This means that this one who can save is the one authorized by the Highest Throne of all; God's Throne. Jesus Christ is the only One who can save you and take you to heaven.

MESSIANIC ACTION #3 – Jesus enters Jerusalem and then leaves it. **11:11**

Now one would think after an entrance like this that this would be the high point of Jesus' life. But notice carefully what we read, Jesus entered Jerusalem, went to the Temple, looked around and left.

This was the King of Kings leaving the very city and Temple where He should have been worshipped.

Instead of that, He leaves and goes to Bethany with the twelve. He looked it over and He left, but He will be back. In fact, He will come back the next day.

But He will be back One day to Jerusalem and to the Temple and the next time He comes back all will bow before Him.

Now listen carefully to this—Jesus does not need you; you need Him. He will save any sinner from any sin if that sinner will believe on Him. This is why He got on the back of a donkey and rode into town.