

Introduction

1. As I've mentioned throughout our study, one of the things Mark does in telling the story of Jesus is to present Him on a journey from the wilderness of Galilee to Jerusalem and the Cross
  - a. As the Messiah and Son of God, Jesus has one primary purpose and it is to get to Jerusalem where He will die for the sins of man and rise from the dead to conquer death
  - b. Mark's use of the word "**immediately**" throughout his gospel (40 times) to move the story along rapidly
  - c. Even though according to the other gospels Jesus made multiple trips to Jerusalem, Mark only records His final trip
2. Today, we come to the end of the journey geographically as Jesus finally arrives at Jerusalem
3. As already noted, His ultimate purpose in Jerusalem was to face the cross, but as we'll see today there was actually purpose in HOW He entered Jerusalem—in fact there were three purposes:
  - a. One purpose was to fulfill prophecy
  - b. A second was to pronounce judgment on Israel
  - c. A third was to confront the corrupt practice of turning the temple into a marketplace

A. We find the first purpose in the timing and manner in which Jesus arrives at Jerusalem (READ 11:1-11)

1. The timing and manner in which Jesus entered Jerusalem was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and there are two primary Messianic passages that will help us see this:
  - a. The first passage is Zechariah 9:9: "**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**"
    - 1) While neither Mark nor Luke reference Zechariah's prophecy, John and Matthew do and state specifically that this event is a direct fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy
    - 2) There are two things of importance here:
      - a) It is a Messianic prophecy that specifically refers to Messiah as "**Your King**" who is coming to Israel
      - b) It also describes the manner in which He will enter Jerusalem: "**mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey**"
  - b. The second passage is Daniel 9:24-27 which Daniel made while the Israelites were in captivity in Babylon and there are three parts to the prophecy (READ):
    - 1) The first part of the prophecy is the arrival of the Messiah (24-25):
      - a) He is referred to as "**Messiah the Prince**" or more literally, "**the Anointed Ruler**" and in the context refers to Messiah
      - b) It even gives us the time when He will appear—483 years after a decree is signed by a Babylonian king to rebuild Jerusalem (7 "weeks" plus 62 "weeks)
      - c) Now there were four different decrees made by three different Babylonian kinds and not all scholars agree as to which one Daniel was referring

- d) However, the most likely is the decree by King Artaxerxes's around 458 BC which restarted the building decreed originally by King Cyrus years earlier (after construction stalled)
  - e) That would put us right about AD 27 AD 33 which matches modern day consensus that Jesus was born and died somewhere between AD 27 and 33
- 2) The second part of the prophecy is the death of the Messiah:
- a) This was to come sometime **"after"** the 483 years above (after the first seven weeks followed by the next sixty-two weeks)
  - b) The phrase **"Messiah will be cut off and have nothing"** is a reference to the death of the Messiah
- 3) The third part of the prophecy is the destruction of Jerusalem (reread 26-27):
- a) The **"prince who is to come"** is generally understood to be the Anti-Christ we find in the book of Revelation
  - b) In v. 26 it states that it's the **"people of the prince who is to come"** (not necessarily the prince himself) who destroys the city and the sanctuary (e.g. Jerusalem and the temple)
  - c) I think this might be important because it's not completely clear if the destruction of vs. 26 and 27 are the same event or if they refer to two different events separated by time
    - It's possible that vs. 26 refers to the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD by the Roman army in 70 when over 1 million Jews were slaughtered—interestingly enough, Matthew records an interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees immediately after the Triumphal entry where Jesus indicates this very thing would soon happen (READ Matthew 21:39-44)
    - v. 27 clearly refers to the still future destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Anti-Christ in the end times
- c. So, Jesus's entrance into Jerusalem fulfills both of these prophecies:
- 1) Both refer to an Anointed Ruler and King and that is exactly how Jesus was hailed as He traveled toward Jerusalem
  - 2) He arrived riding on a colt exactly as described, and this is something He specifically orchestrated as a fulfillment of prophecy
  - 3) His followers laid their garments and leafy branches in the road as part of a royal procession
  - 4) They were even praising Him as royalty:
    - a) Mark 11:9-10 they associate Him with the Davidic Kingdom
    - b) Matthew 21:9 they call him the son of David, a designation of royalty
    - c) Luke 19:38 they actually refer to him as "King"
2. Some myths about the Triumphal Entry:
- a. First, it didn't actually take place on the streets of Jerusalem—rather, it occurred on the road down to Jerusalem
  - b. Second, it wasn't the inhabitants of the city who were participating in the processional and praising Jesus, but rather the procession was made up of those who had been traveling with Jesus (disciples, followers)

- c. It makes for good preaching to claim that the Jews were praising Him and hailing Him as King on Sunday, but then the same Jews were crying out for Him to be crucified by Friday, but that's not necessarily accurate

**B. We find a second purpose in the cursing of the fig tree (READ 11:12-14 & 19-26)**

1. I suspect that the first thing that is going through your mind is why did Jesus get upset and curse the fig tree when it wasn't even the season for figs:
  - a. There have been all kinds of suggestions made in an attempt to answer this but most are unsatisfactory
  - b. However, do know a few things that will help us:
    - 1) According to some sources, the fruit on fig trees first appears before the leaves; according to other sources the fruit and leaves appear together
    - 2) Either way, when you see a fig tree full of mature leaves it should have fruit, even if it's not fully ripened yet
    - 3) The problem we have here, is that even though it's not harvest season (the "season for figs" as Mark calls it), we have a tree full of leaves but no fruit
    - 4) In other words, it was deceptive—this might be one reason why Mark writes that "**Jesus sent to see if perhaps He would find anything on it**"
    - 5) Even though it wasn't time for the figs to be ripe, the leaves indicated there should be fruit, but there was none
2. There is no question that this event is both highly symbolic and prophetic:
  - a. The OT routinely uses the fig tree as a symbol regarding the spiritual nature of Israel, with fruitful fig trees representing a spiritual Israel and fruitless fig trees representing a spiritually dead Israel
  - b. Likewise, cursing is always representative of God's judgment
  - c. We see both of those here:
    - 1) The fig tree with all of its leaves but no fruit represents an Israel that was all show but spiritually dead
    - 2) The cursing of the fig tree serves as a symbol of God's judgment against the nation of Israel
    - 3) We see this in the way Mark sandwiches the cleansing of the temple in between the beginning and the end of this event (e.g. Jesus curses the fig tree, cleanses the temple, then the apostles remark about the dead tree on their way out of Jerusalem)—in other words, the kind of behavior Jesus witnessed in the Temple was exactly the kind of thing for which He had just cursed the fig tree and judged Israel for
3. There are two additional things to consider regarding this event:
  - a. Aside from the resurrection, this is the last miracle Mark records in his gospel and it's an act of judgment against Israel
  - b. Jesus's words, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" take on special meaning when you consider that just a few decades from now Jerusalem and the Temple will be completely destroyed by the Romans and the results are still seen today

**C. We find a third purpose in the cleansing of the temple which was to confront the abuse and corruption in their religious practices (11:15-18)**

1. The gospels record two times when Jesus cleansed the temple:
  - a. The first was early in Jesus's ministry and is recorded in John 2
  - b. The second is here at the end of Jesus's public ministry (READ 11:15-18)
  
2. In this instance, like the first, when Jesus enters the temple He finds a massive marketplace rather than a house of worship:
  - a. This event takes place in the Court of the Gentiles which was the large outer court that surrounded the actual temple and when Jesus arrives it's basically a massive marketplace
  - b. During Passover, people would travel long distance from all over to make their sacrifices and pay the temple tax:
    - 1) People generally didn't travel with their sacrifices, but rather purchased what they needed once they arrived
    - 2) Likewise, they couldn't pay the temple tax (commanded by the law) with Roman currency so they needed a place to exchange it for Tyrian coinage
    - 3) They could do each of these at local marketplaces, but around this time the high priest Caiaphas turned the Court of Gentiles into a market place, apparently to compete directly with the other markets
  - c. So, Jesus flips over the tables of the money changers and drives out anyone buying or selling goods
  
3. We find in Jesus' actions here two objections to what was happening:
  - a. The first objection is that the Court of Gentiles was supposed to be a place for God-fearing gentiles to come and pray:
    - 1) Jesus quotes from Isaiah (READ Isaiah 56:6 & 7)
    - 2) Gentiles were prohibited from entering the temple itself so the Court of Gentiles was the furthest they could
    - 3) But, Caiaphas and religious leaders had turned it into a chaotic market place
  - b. The second objection was the corruption:
    - 1) Not everyone agrees that Jesus was referring to corrupt business practices when He claimed they had turned the court into a "**robbers' den**"
    - 2) He's actually quoting from Jeremiah 7:11 (READ Jeremiah 7:9-11) where the context is God likening those who habitually commit abominations and then go stand before Him in his temple to a robbers' den
    - 3) It's not hard to imagine, however, that in the current context of a marketplace that not everything was on the up and up (e.g. they not only paid a fee to exchange their currency but then possibly paid a markup on the livestock)
  
4. The religious leaders obviously weren't too happy with Jesus and began to plan how to kill him (18)
  
5. Is there any parallel between what was happening them in the temple and what's happening in the Church today?