

The Gospel of Mark

Lesson 26: Mark 11:1-14

Jesus enters Jerusalem (vv. 1-11)

Matt. 21:1-11
Luke 19:29-44
John 12:12-19

- Bethphage is just outside Jerusalem, while Bethany is about two miles away on the other side of the Mount of Olives
- Jesus has two unnamed disciples procure the colt of a donkey
- Mark does not overtly connect Jesus to the fervor of the crowd
 - Singing of Psalm 118 would be normal during feast pilgrimages
 - Matthew 21:10-11, Luke 19:39-40, and John 12:12, 17-19 all associate Jesus' work and fame with the people's frenzy
 - Notably, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead recently (John 11)
- Palm branches were a symbol of Jewish nationalism since the Maccabees
- Spreading of clothes was a show of respect and submission (2 Kings 9:13)
- Matthew quotes Zechariah 9:9 to illuminate this event

Why would the gospel writers emphasize the disciples getting the colt?

What does the colt having never been ridden tell us (ritually and practically)?

Why does Mark so downplay the messianic aspects of Jesus' ride into Jerusalem?

Why does Jesus take the time to look around the temple?

The fig tree is cursed (vv. 12-14)

Matt. 21:18-19

- Fig trees would not have edible fruit in the spring of the year
- Some have wrongly seen Jesus as angry and uninformed about the lack of figs on the tree
- Many consider this episode to be a living parable or object lesson
 - The leaves present the promise of underlying fruit
 - The lack of figs shows that the plant is actually useless at this juncture
 - Jesus' curse on the fig tree is a picture of judgment

Who would Jesus be highlighting with this "destruction miracle"?