

MARK

Lesson 11

Mark Chapters 11-13

In this lesson as well as the next one, we will be studying the week leading up to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Today we would call that week the week of Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday.

We know from our previous lesson that Jesus has traveled south from Capernaum, teaching as he traveled, arriving the night before in Bethany—the home of Lazarus. Here, Jesus will raise Lazarus from the dead.

Prior to Jesus' arrival, at the death of Lazarus, the family had hired mourners who traveled up to Bethany from Jerusalem, about a two to three mile journey. These mourners were present when Jesus arrived and raised Lazarus from the dead.

Seeing this great miracle, they ran back to Jerusalem to tell everyone all that they saw and how Jesus must be the promised Messiah. The excitement they generate will result in a large crowd greeting Jesus and his disciples as he enters Jerusalem on a white donkey, on the day we now call Palm Sunday. Our final two studies will examine the events that transpired from the day of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem until his death on the cross and his resurrection on Easter Sunday.



Let's read Mark Chapters 11-13 and consider each day of that week as covered in scripture.

SUNDAY – PALM SUNDAY

Let's first consider what Jerusalem was like as Jesus was approaching and when he entered the city during the week of Passover.

Outside the Temple walls, violence erupts, as the religious zealots decide to take the law into their own hands. Activists, full of righteous indignation and political agendas that oppose the status quo, regularly incite acts of violence in an attempt to unseat the current leadership and intimidate all who come to worship. Add to this the Roman Guard, imposing Roman rule on the citizens of Jerusalem, with no more concern for the significance of Christ's arrival than anyone else in the packed streets of the city. Accustomed to the use of force—brutal force if need be—they patrol the streets to suppress the zealots and any who will call for a new king and freedom from Roman bondage.

On this Passover, in excess of 500,000 people come into the city for the required sacrifices and Temple activities. And yet, days later, only 500 people will admit to having seen the risen Christ. During the week of Passover, upwards of 100,000 lambs are slaughtered; and yet the Lamb of God will be the only real and meaningful sacrifice in a city and country that is so far from God.

Many had heard of Jesus' great miracles and of his raising of Lazarus from the dead. The crowds press forward on the Sunday before Passover, as Christ enters the city riding on a donkey. Curious but unbelieving, most go about their Passover rituals with little notice of Christ except when he teaches in the Temple during the week. Little do they realize that behind the crowded streets, the crooked money changers, and the marketplace full of merchants using corrupted weights for measure and excessive prices, is a group of religious leaders bent on murdering Christ. Yet in love and grace and great humility, Jesus enters the city to offer himself as the Lamb of God to save them, and us, from God's wrath and eternal punishment.

1. Read Mark 11:1-11, what time of day was it when Jesus entered the city? Where did he and the disciples spend the night?

MONDAY

On Monday we see Jesus curse a fig tree, drive out merchants and money changers, and he has his authority questioned by the Pharisees.

2. If the fig tree represents Israel. what message is Jesus sending in cursing the fig tree and the driving out of the merchants and money changers? (see Mark 11:12-19)

TUESDAY

Jesus will have a full day of teaching in the Temple on this day. He begins with a lesson on faith for his disciples. Showing them that even moving mountains was not impossible with God, as long as they had that this degree of faith. Just as he had taught them the prior week (see Mark 10:27), nothing is impossible for God.

In the Temple, Jesus is confronted by the Jewish leadership, and his authority is questioned. As they try to trap Jesus, he catches them in their own trap—they cannot question his authority, because they would have to acknowledge it if they did. Jesus will then spend the day teaching those in the Temple a significant lesson about a vineyard (see Mark 12:1-11), followed by teachings on paying taxes, life after we are resurrected, warnings about the teachers of the Law, and a final lesson on true faith.

At the end of a long day, Tuesday, he concludes his teaching on the Mount of Olives with a warning about the coming destruction of the Temple and End Times.

3. Through all of these teachings his target is the religious leadership and the teachers of the Law. He is warning everyone not to listen to them, and he is doing this through parables. Do the Jewish leaders know that he is talking about them. Do they understand these teachings? (see Mark 12:12)

4. As Jesus was doing all of this teaching in the Temple, and targeting the teachers of the Law, what did the crowd think of his teaching and his comments about the teachers? (see Mark 12:37)

So, it is the end of the day on Tuesday, and the Jewish leadership is out to get Jesus, but the large crowd is supportive of Jesus and his teaching. In two more days the tables will turn, as Christ is betrayed; and three days later, on Friday, another large crowd will gather, shouting "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

5. As Jesus leaves the temple at the end of a busy day of teaching, he and his disciples walk out of the Temple area. Walking along the large stone walls surrounding the Temple, one of the disciples comments on the size of the stones. Jesus' answer leads to another question: they ask Jesus when he will set up his kingdom. Jesus' answer includes two important things for us to know today. Read the following and list what those two important things are that talk about his return.

- a. Mark 13: 14-22

- b. Mark 13: 32-37

In order for us to do as Jesus taught, we need to know our Bible, be in constant prayer, and do exactly as Jesus commanded. Watch! Watch for the specific sign he mentions in Mark, i.e., the "abomination that causes desolation," and understand that absolutely no one knows the day or the hour; so do not be deceived.

We will pause our lesson here, and we will pick up Wednesday through Saturday in the next (and final) lesson, which describes the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus. We can already see from this lesson that, literally up to the moment of his death, Jesus was teaching about the Kingdom of God, warning everyone about the poisonous teachings and leadings of the chief priests and teachers of the Law. Jesus continued to proclaim the Gospel message right up to the moment of his death, which we will study next week.

May we gain a great understanding of the significance of the week between Palm Sunday and Easter, and a greater realization of Jesus as our Lord and Savior during our studies these next three weeks. Praise God, Jesus has risen and is sitting at the Father's right hand!

Have a great week everyone!

In Christ,

Wes