

Exegetical Notes, Mark 11:1-11

“It Begins”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kyllies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

Mark 11:1-11

Verses 1-3:

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

- The careful description of this place sets this story into the landscape of Jerusalem with great accuracy. This is to assure anyone who is doubtful of the historical setting of the event. .
- The village in which the colt was found is Bethphage.
- The directions that Jesus gave to the disciples are detailed and complete. It is clear that Jesus is working a plan. Whether this plan was arranged by human means or by supernatural ones is unclear. What is clear is that Jesus’ actions are intentional and deliberate and that the disciples are to follow his instructions to the letter.

Verses 4-6:

They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

- Donkeys were important and valuable animals. Taking someone’s donkey might be considered equivalent to taking their car (in modern times). When the disciples sent by Jesus to get the donkey attempted to take it, those standing around, not the owner but those who knew to whom the animal belonged, questioned the disciple’s intention. The disciples made the reply that Jesus gave them. This satisfied the persons who raised the objections.

- The fact that all this is recorded in such detail indicates that this detail was important to those who told the story. Apparently, they found it exceptional that no one raised objections to the disciples taking the donkey once they knew the Lord has sent for it.

Verses 7-8:

When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.

- Jesus rode on the donkey over a carpet made of clothing and cut branches.

Verses 9-10:

Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father, David! Hosanna in the highest.”

- A spontaneous parade formed. Other pilgrims who were making their way into Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover began to offer praise to God using words taken from Psalm 118:25-26 and 2 Samuel 7:11-14. These were considered Messianic greetings and indicate that the crowd welcomed Jesus as Israel’s coming Messiah.
- The scene becomes a reenactment of Zechariah 9:9 through which Jesus’ claim to be Israel’s Messiah is laid before the people and accepted by them.

Verse 11:

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

- The parade led to the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus entered the Temple but did nothing there that day. As it was late in the day, he returned to Bethany, to the house of his friend Lazarus, where he spent the night with the disciples.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *It Begins*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)