

# Disappointed and Dissatisfied

April 2-8, 2023



## **MAIN POINT**

Knowing He was about to be crucified, Jesus made a triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem and cleared the temple.

## **INTRODUCTION**

If you wanted to make a “big entrance” into a town, what would you most want to be riding?

If you could have anyone in the world announce your entrance to those gathered, who would you choose? Why?

When asked to give a speech to the audience, what would be the main theme of your remarks?

We see a lot of people on television who make a “big entrance”—celebrities, political leaders, etc. In today’s passage, read about Jesus making His final entrance into Jerusalem. The crowd was visibly excited, as word had spread about the miracles he had performed and the way he taught with authority. The crowd received Him with joy, believing Jesus was the Messiah they had been waiting for—a military leader who would crush their enemies and establish them once again as an autonomous nation.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

**READ [MARK 11:1-11](#).**

What is the closest you have come to witnessing something like Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem (i.e., a World Series parade)?

When Jesus mounted the young donkey, what did it signify to the Jewish people? How did they react? Who was conspicuously absent?

According to [Zechariah 9:9](#), the King would come to Jerusalem riding on a colt. Jesus would not simply enter Jerusalem. He would come as the messianic King. However, He would not come as a Warrior-King as the people expected, riding a war horse. [Matthew 21:2](#) states that this was a donkey, specifically fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy and emphasizing the peaceful, gentle nature of the Messiah.

**What kind of Messiah did the crowd think Jesus was?**

**At this point do you think there is anyone who really understood Jesus’ true identity and purpose?**

The time for secrecy so prominent earlier in Mark ([8:30](#); [9:9](#)) was past. His whole arrival rang of messianic expectations, from the obvious intent to fulfill specific prophecies ([Zechariah 9:9](#); [14:4](#)), to the royal greetings ([2 Kings 9:13](#)), to the cries to God to “Save now.” Nevertheless, the understanding and expectations of the crowd were still incomplete.

**READ [MARK 11:15-19](#).**

**Why did Jesus go to the temple?**

**What kind of reception did he get there?**

**In what ways did Jesus believe the temple area had been made into “a den of thieves” (v. 17)? Who was He referring to? Why do you think He was so upset?**

Worship in the temple centered on sacrifice. Those wishing to participate were required to offer an unblemished animal, and apparently temple inspectors approved only those animals bought from certified vendors who sold animals at a huge markup. Further, at Passover, each Jew was required to pay a temple tax of one-half shekel—nearly two days’ wages. No other currency was acceptable, necessitating money changes to exchange the money of pilgrims coming from outside. While a lamb was normally required for sacrifice, the Law had a provision that those too poor to afford a lamb could offer a dove instead ([Leviticus 5:7](#)). While this provision was still observed, temple vendors charged 20 times what it cost to buy a dove outside the temple.

The outermost area of the temple where all these activities were taking place was called the Court of the Gentiles. It was intended to be a place where pious Gentiles could pray. Instead it had been turned into a raucous oriental bazaar, making prayer impossible and thus doing away with the only place in the temple where non-Jews could come before the true God.

**What does this cleansing of the temple tell you about Jesus?**

**Why did Jesus choose to cleanse the temple but not to overthrow the government?**

The phrase “Den of thieves” is from [Jeremiah 7:11](#). In the days of Jeremiah, the religious authorities likewise masked their corruption with the veneer of religion. By using this phrase, Jesus implied that the judgment Jeremiah pronounced upon the leaders of his day applied to these leaders as well.

**APPLICATION**

**How do you feel about expressing anger?**

**In what circumstances might God be calling you to express some righteous anger?**

**How are you doing at letting Jesus cleanse your life of sin?**

**What areas of your life still need some “spring cleaning”?**

**PRAYER**

Praise Jesus, who forever reigns as Messiah-King. Invite Him to cleanse your life of anything that displeases Him and prevents others from seeing Him for who He is.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **MARK 11:1-11, 15-19**

**11:1.** This verse introduces a new section in Jesus' ministry as he entered Jerusalem. This introduces what is typically called the passion week, beginning with his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and ending with his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Six of Mark's sixteen chapters deal with this last week. This shows the importance of these events in Jesus' life. Jesus went through the village Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, two miles east of Jerusalem. Bethphage is less well-known but near Bethany.

**11:2-3.** Most interpreters think the city Jesus sent the disciples to was Bethphage because it was closer to Jerusalem. Some commentators take this verse as evidence of Jesus' omniscience. Others believe that Jesus had prearranged receiving the colt on one of his other trips to Jerusalem. The text does not indicate which view is correct, but neither does damage to the text or to the character of Jesus.

Jesus gave instructions that if anyone asked what they were doing, the disciples were to reply that the Lord needs it. The word "Lord" (Gr. "kyrios") could mean "Lord" or simply "master." It is the first time in Mark's Gospel that Jesus referred to himself as Lord. While he could have meant simply "master" or "sir," he probably meant Lord in our fullest interpretation of the word. The messianic secret which is so prevalent in Mark's Gospel is slowly being revealed. Jesus has spoken to his disciples of his messiahship, identity, death, and resurrection. It would not be out of keeping with this gradual revelation for him to further reveal himself here.

**11:4-6.** The fact that a great number of details are given here may point to Peter as one of the two disciples sent on this errand. The situation happened as Jesus warned them, and they repeated Jesus' words to the questioners. While a few interpreters think the words had a powerful effect on the listeners—enough for them to relinquish their possession of the colt—the text does not support this. It seems more likely that the owners would have heard of Jesus. Perhaps they knew him personally and they realized he was an honest man, if not a prophet. They could be sure of having the colt returned.

**11:7-8.** Cloaks were laid on the colt to serve as a rough saddle. The cloaks thrown on the ground along with the branches served as recognition of royalty. There was lavishness in their love, even though their love had not reached full potential. At this moment, they did love him with all their hearts and desired to honor him as king.

**11:9-10.** These two verses make it clear what the crowds were expecting. "Hosanna" means literally "save now." It was an acclamation of praise to one who had the power to save. The same word is used in Psalm 118:25, where it is translated, "O Lord, save us." This psalm is a thanksgiving psalm. Interpretations vary as to what it referred to. It may have referred to deliverance from Egypt, or it could have celebrated release from captivity and the rebuilt temple. In either case, it celebrated deliverance from captivity. It was an appropriate psalm for Jesus, who came to deliver humanity from captivity to sin and death.

The reference to David's kingdom is a clear messianic title. The crowds were acknowledging that Jesus was heir to David's throne. He who comes was another euphemism for the Messiah. The crowds expected Jesus to establish his kingdom immediately.

**11:11.** True to Mark's Gospel, the triumphant entry into Jerusalem is a bit more somber here than that recorded in Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew states that the city was stirred, and Luke says that the crowd was singing joyfully. But Mark records that when these events

were finished, he went to the temple, had a look around, and then went back to Bethany, most likely to the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. This verse shows Jesus as thoughtful, deliberate. This thoughtful pause here and the actions that follow remind us of a prophecy of judgment in Daniel: “You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting” (5:27). The guilty verdict was in; the sentence would be carried out the next day.

**11:15.** Jesus had seen the buying and selling going on in the temple the night before, so His actions here are deliberate and well thought out—not a random act of violence, as some have suggested. Matthew and Luke also record the clearing of the temple at this time. John places this event at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. It is possible that there were two separate cleansings of the temple by Jesus.

**11:17.** Notice the phrase, as He taught them. After throwing out the merchants and overturning their tables, Jesus the rabbi would have explained His actions to His disciples. Jesus quoted from [Isaiah 56:7](#) and [Jeremiah 7:11](#). The rest of the passage in Jeremiah predicts God’s destruction of Solomon’s temple. The hearers most certainly noted this and the veiled threat it implied. It is no wonder that the rulers feared him.

Jesus’ mention of a house of prayer for all nations signifies that He had in mind the Gentiles. They had been pushed out of the outer court of the temple area by the proliferation of merchandise. Gentiles were allowed to worship in the temple, although only in its outer circle. Den of robbers does not mean a place of dishonest dealings, although it may have been that. This phrase probably referred to a refuge for unjust persons. The Jews of the day felt secure in God’s acceptance because of their rituals and laws. They were like a tree in full foliage that bore no fruit.

**11:18.** The chief priests knew, as did the rulers, that Jesus was claiming an authority higher than theirs. They feared Him because the crowd loved Him and believed Him to be the Messiah.

**11:19.** It would not have been safe for Jesus to remain in the city with all the plots against His life. They probably returned each night to Bethany, where Jesus could spend time with friends.