

The Return of the King ~ Mark 11

Jesus enters Jerusalem on a colt as Zechariah promised. Cloaks cover the road and the crowd shouts, “Hosanna!” Yet He heads to the temple, looks around at everything, and leaves for Bethany. The King has come to His house. What does He see?

1. The King comes to inspect

Malachi said the Lord would come to His temple like a refiner’s fire. Jesus walks past Rome and examines those who claim to belong to Him. On the road back, He approaches a fig tree covered in leaves and finds no fruit. Mark says it was not the season for figs. Jesus’ curse is a prophetic sign aimed at the temple: magnificent buildings, crowded courts, sacrifices, and priests, but no fruit worthy of the King. Leaves can give every appearance of life.

2. The King comes to cleanse

Jesus drives out buyers and sellers and overturns the money changers’ tables. “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations,” He says, “but you have made it a den of robbers.” Isaiah 56 promised a place for foreigners to worship; Jeremiah 7 warned those who trusted in the temple while living in sin. Jesus exposes religious privilege used as a shelter from repentance. The Lord’s house had become busy, but its purpose had been obscured.

Paul says the Spirit is now building the Church into God’s dwelling place (Ephesians 2). **Christ has given us a purpose:** proclaim His Gospel, gather His people, and worship Him. Are those who do not know Christ in Rock Valley the concern of our prayers? Does our worship direct people to Jesus? Are our children learning to love Him, or only to behave in church? Religious activity cannot substitute for faith and obedience.

3. The King comes to judge

The next morning the fig tree is withered to its roots. Within a generation Jerusalem’s temple would fall. Jesus tells His disciples, “Have faith in God,” and teaches them to pray and forgive. The old sanctuary would be destroyed, but through His death and resurrection Christ would gather a people in whom God dwells. His power does not depend on any earthly institution.

The leaders then demand to know Jesus’ authority. He asks whether John’s baptism came from heaven or man. John had announced the Messiah, and at Jesus’ baptism the Father called Him His beloved Son. The leaders refuse to answer because they fear the crowd. They think Jesus is on trial. The Judge is examining them.

He still examines His churches. Jesus told Ephesus that its hard work and sound teaching had not kept it from abandoning its first love: “Remember ... repent” (Revelation 2:4–5). We maintain buildings, serve on committees, and keep things in order. Our leaves can be green. I see good fruit at Trinity, but we must submit ourselves to His pruning. Is there love for Christ beneath the activity? Have you carried bitterness for years? Does His Gospel still move you to repentance?

We can withstand the refiner’s fire only in Christ. The Judge entered Jerusalem to stand accused before men. On the cross He became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). Our judgment fell on Him, and those He saves He makes fruitful by His Spirit. Remember your first love. Ask Him to expose hypocrisy, cleanse His Church, and make this a house of prayer for all nations, where sinners are welcomed, and God is worshiped in spirit and truth.