

Mark 11:1-11

“The Triumphal entry”

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I. **Introduction**

We move forward in the time line of Jesus earthly life, as we enter the 11th chapter of Mark’s gospel and moved into His final week. The final 6 chapters are divided into four events that fit into that final week:

- 1. 11:1-13:37 From the temple to the Mount of Olives
- 2. 14:1-14:52 From the upper room to the garden of Gethsemane
- 3. 14:53-15:20 From His arrest to His sentence
- 4. 15:21-16:20 From the cross to the great commission

There is in each gospel account by design a disproportional amount of time spent in the final week of Jesus’ earthly life. As noted above we are about to investigate the event known as Palm Sunday or the triumphal entry. One of the interesting things to me is how easy it is to misdiagnose the miraculous of this scene. For example, there is a tendency to assign the miraculous to the “*finding of the colt*” while not recognizing how utterly miraculous the response of the multitude was to Jesus ridding on that colt. As I analyze that fact I wonder if the same could not be said of our lives as a whole? Do we assign some events of our lives as “*miraculous*” that in reality aren’t, while missing our Lord showing up at other times? Though the study at hand is a historical narrative it may very

well be more than that as the Lord is at all times desiring to make a “*triumphal entry*” into our everyday life.

The story at hand appears to be simple and straight forward at first glance but like everything about our Lord there is nothing about Him that doesn't surprise even the slightest investigation. The 12 with the multitude have come up from Jericho all following Jesus as they arrive a week early for the Passover feast.

Geographically, a person could go to Jerusalem and enter the temple a few different ways. What we read is that Jesus went up to Jerusalem through Bethphage which tells us that His approach was going to be through the main gate. This is the route that dignitaries and important people would enter the City and temple. It is believed that most of the time that Jesus had previously entered the city He had done so through the opposite way through the “sheep gate”. Clearly Jesus did this as He wanted to make an entrance. As you ascend the Mount of Olives you leave the little village of Bethany and at the top of the Mount is Bethphage (house of figs) the larger better known village. Then you start your descent into the Garden of Gethsemane. Right after this you would cross the little Brook of Kidron in the valley and go into the temple. From Bethany to the Temple would only be about 3 miles. Bethany was the place where the colt was to be picked up and Bethphage was the place where Jesus mounted it and rode it down towards the temple on the descent from the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane. In John chapter 10 verse 22 we learn that three months earlier Jesus in January, during the Feast of Dedication known today as Hanukkah, was in this very area. As such it seems obvious to me that the instructions given by Jesus in verses 2-3 and what the two disciples discovered in Bethany in verse 4-6 need not be attributed as a miracle. It most

likely was planned back in January by Jesus in anticipation of His Triumphal entry.

Further more I believe that Jesus did this because He was very aware of the prophecy in Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9 where we read “*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.*” The reluctance of some to have this interpretation is they feel that in holding it that in some way it lessens Jesus. The argument goes like this: “*If Jesus **engineered** this just to fulfill a prophecy, that is not fulfilling a prophecy it is manufacturing a prophecy?*” My answer to that is; “*Arranging for your transportation in line with the prophecy, is not the same thing as manufacturing the event!*” **There are four things that Jesus could not have manufactured:**

II. Vs. 1-6 The timing of the event

1. **Vs. 1-6 The Timing of the event:** Jesus knew the exact day that this event was to take place. So we can get the timing of events down: This would have been the Saturday the Sabbath which means that there would have been no money changers only priests and Jesus’s arrival would have been as if He was the Great High Priest. Sunday the first of the week would have been when Jesus cleanses the temple spoken of in verses 15-19, it is where Jesus revealed himself as the King with authority. Then on Monday according to Luke 19:41 Jesus goes back into the city and weeps over it before again cleansing the temple, where He presents himself as a prophet. As interesting as those details are they are only a part of the picture along with ridding the colt. Zechariah’s prophecy is placed in the middle of a prophecy where the prophet is speaking about the land of Syria. When Matthew recorded that the triumphal entry was done to fulfill Zechariah’s prophecy he deliberately leaves out two phrases from Zechariah’s words “*Rejoices greatly*” and “*He is just and having salvation*”. The reason for this is the difference between Jesus’ 1st coming and His 2nd coming. But what this prophecy points towards is another prophecy, Daniel 9:25 “*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.*” The time tables importance was discovered by the former director and detective of the Scotland Yard in the 1900’s who was not only a brilliant detective but also an avid bible student. Sir Robert Anderson put all this in a book called “*The Coming Prince*” where he pieces together the exact date of the fulfillment of Daniel’s and Zechariah’s

prophecies. The key to unraveling this date was finding the time when the “*command to restore and build Jerusalem*” was issued. You find that answer in Nehemiah chapter 2 verse 1 where we are told that it was issued in the “*Twentieth year of King Artaxerxes*”. What Sir Robert Anderson discovered by analyzing the book of Daniel as well as factoring in the fact that in the day that Daniel wrote this prophecy they used a 360 day’s a year calendar; was that the date of *King Artaxerxes* decree was March 28th, 445 B.C. Next he looked at the specific phraseology of “*seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*”. The word used for “*weeks*” is “*sevens*” and in Hebrew literature it refers to years. So that would make the math out to be 49 years and 434 years for a total of 483, using the 360 day years or 173,880 days from the date of the decree “*Until Messiah the Prince*”. If you count out those days it places the date at April 6th, 32 A.D. which just so happens to be this very day when Jesus road into Jerusalem on a colt.

III. Vs. 7 The behavior of a colt

2. **Vs. 7 The behavior of the colt**: Matthew records for us that there were two donkeys where as Mark just mentions the colt. But there is no contradiction here as Jesus rode the colt and the colt’s mother came along. Also of interest is that a donkey is an animal of peace where as a horse is the animal of war and in Revelation chapter 19 verse 11 we will see Jesus riding a horse upon His return. There is no way in which Jesus could have pre-engineered the behavior of this colt as they do not enjoy the first experience of being ridden. They will buck and kick in the process known as “*breaking*”. Yet we read of none of this with regards to this colt, it was docile, responsive, and obedient which completely contradicts the animal’s natural instincts. **I submit to you that the procurement of the colt was not miraculous but it’s behavior sure was!** The only conclusion I can make is that the rider that day was none other than the very person who created the colt and the very one that even the wind and the waves must obey!

IV. Vs. 8-10 The response of the crowd

3. **Vs. 8-10 The response of the crowd**: This event that had been prophesied for 483 years went largely unnoticed by the people of Jerusalem. John in chapter 12 verse 12 tells us that the “*great multitude had COME to the feast...and had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him.*” According to Matthew we know that those that spread out their clothes and tree branches that day were not the inhabitants of Jerusalem as the people of the city asked “*Who is this?*” and the answer came back from those from the surrounding areas of Galilee “*This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.*” The citizens of Jerusalem were going about their normal business and were completely oblivious to the fact that Jesus was that very day fulfilling a 483-year-old prophesy. It was the strangers and pilgrims that day that fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 118:22-26 a psalm which Jesus ascribes to himself. They began to praise Jesus as He road that colt down the Mount of Olives because of “*all the mighty works they had seen.*” So powerful was this praise that it drew the anger of the Pharisees who told Jesus to rebuke the crowd of followers and Jesus told them that “*If these should keep silent, the stones*

would immediately cry out.” Now that is miraculous, the heart of people praising Jesus and a warning that if they stopped a “rock concert was about to break out, staring the **stones**”! There was no way Jesus could have orchestrated that, the spontaneous praise of people over His mighty works singing Hosanna, “Save now, save now!”

V. Vs. 11 The response of the religious leaders

4. **Vs. 11 The attitude of the religious leaders:** Historians tell us that at this time Jerusalem had a population of around 80,000 but during religious feasts the population would swell to over 250,000. Yet with this said as the opposite of those singing praise songs to him the people of Jerusalem were disinterested and the religious leaders were antagonistic. Here the Lord was about to fulfill a 483-year-old prophecy as Jesus was riding into the city on a colt as people praised Him. Unwillingly they also fulfilled prophecies as Psalm 118:22-26 reminds us “***The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.***” Here were the “builders rejecting the chief cornerstone” and on Monday as Jesus again approached the city we are told in Luke 19:41-44 He wept over it saying, “*If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.*” Forty years from this pronouncement the Roman general Titus’ armies laid siege to the city. Titus gave a command not to burn the Temple but the soldiers violated that order which caused the gold in the temple treasury to melt and run through the cracks of the stones. When the fire had gone out the soldiers dismantled the temple to get the gold that not one stone was left upon another. And this was done because they hadn’t known the time of their visitation!

I find it interesting that when Jesus made it into the temple that Saturday “*He looked around at all things*” then He just left with the 12. I think that our Lord often comes into our lives like this, looks around when we can’t put on our Sunday best inspecting what we ought to have been asking Him to reveal in our blindness about ourselves. Spiritual blindness is a preventable disease if we will simply be open to Him revealing it to us and not be all caught up in making “*finding our colt*” a miracle!