

And They Come Again to Jerusalem

Mark 11:1 – 33

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is a worldwide worship expedition whereby we present the wonderful teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ to the entire world in a real and meaningful way. We have been traveling with Jesus and the apostles and we're coming to the final days on earth with Him now! In this report, we see Jesus come into Jerusalem. The so-called "Triumphal Entry" was not really a triumphal entry at all; because Jesus came to Jerusalem to die for our sins. As we said in Matthew, that is no triumph in this safari. When we see the dead rise in Christ, and those that are alive following Him, and that order of saints marching in – THAT will be a Triumphal Entry! What this account amounts to is a rejection of His overture.

God says this will all take place in the twinkling of an eye – and I believe Him - but I ALSO believe it will take place over a very long period of time; because that's one Christmas parade that reaches not to the moon – but all the way to the New Jerusalem; when Jesus leads the way to a new creation. It is a beautiful paradox, and THAT will be a triumph as I define "triumph." We also know He came into the city on three separate days and not on just one day. We went over this completely in Matthew regarding each Gospel and their presentation of the Lord Jesus entering Jerusalem, so we'll not devote that time here again in Mark. The reports from Matthew are available....

1 And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

~ We're moving with Jesus both geographically and chronologically now. We are in the last week of His earthly life. Bethany and Bethphage are two little towns on the backside of the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem. Jesus went from there into Jerusalem each day; but He never spent the night in the city. When He came into Jerusalem, He was riding the colt and there are two possible explanations about this event. Jesus could have known about this beforehand; because He was God and God knows all things. That would have made this miraculous and mysterious from beginning to end; however, if this had all been arranged before hand that would make it entirely human. It doesn't seem necessary to throw in a miracle of omniscience here after all of the healings and raising others from the dead. It actually seems as if it would be counter-productive to the apostles to do that. I think Jesus had this arranged before hand and these people were expecting the Lord at Passover. The apostles merely followed the instructions of the Lord and returned with what they needed. It seems to have much more meaning to us today if we view it like this and not a miracle. Jesus asserts His authority by saying He has a need, and the people assert their allegiance - even while His murder is being plotted on the other side of town. Some obey, but others want to kill Him! That's the case at this time in which we are studying - and it has remained true for about two thousand years so far....

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

~ I'm sure this was positively unimpressive to those in Jerusalem that day. Anyone who had seen the Roman army return from a campaign must have thought this was some sort of a joke. When the Roman army came back from conquering a land, the return processional could last two or three days – and all night long! Here, Jesus has but a handful of followers. What is important is that this is the first day of three separate days we have a record of that Jesus entered the temple like this. It is obviously the Sabbath because the money changers and the oxen are not there. Jesus enters as Priest and He is the sacrifice, presenting Himself publicly to be offered for your sins and my sins. Well, that's all Jesus does this time; and, as far as I can tell, Jesus never spent the night in any city that rejected Him....

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

~ "On the morrow" means they came back a second time; and this little fig incident still causes great big controversies. Our Spiritual Safari takes the position that the fig tree represents the nation Israel, spiritually speaking. I understand all of the opposing views and other credible interpretations of

this passage; and this safari is not going to become controversial. All we're interested in are the great spiritual truths and lessons; and it's clear that Israel had some outward leaves of religion but NO spiritual fruit. THAT is our interpretation of this account. Many do not like that and even more disagree - which is fine with me - because, I say, go lead your own so-called safari!

Do you think Jesus would say this about the church today? We have a whole bunch of groves with fig trees – all bushy and green – but no fruit whatsoever! They don't even have a nub of a bud that could possibly someday grow into fruit – they are just fruitless! That's what Jesus said about the church at Laodicea. They were poor and blind, and the Holy Spirit was not there. They simply refused to flower! They drew near to God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him! Their fear of God is taught by the precepts of men. That is precisely the condition of the modern-day church. Matthew gave some more details and I urge you to read his account of this again....

15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

~ John tells us Jesus cleansed the temple at the beginning of His ministry and here He is cleansing the temple at the end of His ministry; and this would have been on Sunday. It seems this happened more than once. The money changers are in the temple on this day. The money changers are what we know as the Wall Street stockbrokers. There was a currency in the temple that a foreigner would be charged a percentage of upon exchange. It served a good purpose, with the exception that they had become a den of thieves! This has become nothing in the world but a religious racket for these people at the time in which we are studying.

That's always a danger in ANY Christian enterprise that accepts donations. That's why you should always check these religiously disguised "charities" before you ever give them one red penny. Most Christian giving is absolutely sinful today. I think most Christians should confess their giving

and repent of it while asking God for guidance about where to give their money, time and prayers to. Which program is getting out the Word of God? - That is the best test revealing a worthy cause. I'm not that hard to check up on; anyone that wants to meet me for lunch – just tell me where! I can promise you that Jesus doesn't have to come through the Spiritual Safari World International Headquarters cleaning it up with a whip....

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

~ So, "in the morning" makes day three; and Peter, marveling at the tree, causes Jesus to give this discourse on faith and prayer. The first step in any prayer is faith in God! Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is God and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him! The skeptic of the past has said that prayer is a madman talking to himself; and that just happens to be unfortunately and frighteningly accurate if you don't trust in God and have faith that He can help you.

Of course, this next verse has been so deeply misunderstood and woefully misapplied by the church that all I can do is bow my head in shame when I hear it taught incorrectly. The Christian today doesn't have any need to move mountains around, friends! The Christian DOES need power for daily living, though; and for meeting the mountains of cares and concerns that come with daily life. I want to be strengthened in might by the Holy Spirit within my inner man! That would be better than moving mountains for me. I think Jesus is using a visible illustration so the apostles can see what He is talking about spiritually regarding our inner man. If you really want to see mountains move, then get to the place where His will is done in your life through obedience - and see how that changes things for you....

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

~ If we stood on this basis some of us would have some real problems, to be sure. An unforgiving spirit can completely block the power of prayer! God forgives us for Christ's sake; and that's why and how we are saved - but if you want the power of the Holy Spirit in your life, you're going to need to know something about forgiveness - and obedience. They're inextricably intertwined....

27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

~ Well, here come the bloodhounds of hate on Jesus trail – again! The Pharisees were the ones in authority, and they just haven't happened to have given any authority to Jesus; so, they want to know where He got it! Of course, they deny Him, but they can sure make demands of Him. I have always found that interesting with the atheist. When they said they "... could not tell" they were blatantly confessing their ignorance; and this is a group of people that thought they knew everything there was to know! What fools! Some have said Jesus didn't answer their questions, so He gave them sufficient grounds for rejecting Him but, no, friends; the Pharisees weren't interested in an answer from Jesus They're only trying to entangle Him in His words! Of course, Jesus isn't going to answer their question! Jesus doesn't get trapped; and the greatest proof of His deity here on earth is the way He handles His enemy ~

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