

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO MARK 11

Ver. 1. *And when they came nigh to Jerusalem*, etc..] The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “when he came nigh”; that is, Jesus; though not without his disciples, nor the multitude:

unto Bethphage and Bethany; two places so called, near Jerusalem: Bethphage began where Bethany ended, and reached to the city itself. The Vulgate Latin only makes mention of Bethany; (see Gill on “~~421C~~ Matthew 21:1”).

At the Mount of Olives; near which, the above places were:

he sendeth forth two of his disciples; perhaps Peter and John.

Ver. 2. *And saith unto them, go your way into the village*, etc..] Either of Bethany or of Nob. The Ethiopic version renders it “the city”, and so reads a copy of Stephens's: some have thought the city of Jerusalem is intended, but without any reason; (see Gill on “~~421D~~ Matthew 21:9”);

over against you. The Syriac and Persic versions read, “over against us”: the sense is the same; for Christ and his disciples were together: this suits with either of the above mentioned places:

and as soon as ye be entered into it; are come to the town's end, and to one of the first houses in it,

ye shall find a colt tied: Matthew says, “an ass tied, and a colt with her”, (~~421E~~ Matthew 21:2); both no doubt true:

whereon never man sat; which had never been backed and broke, and which makes it the more wonderful, that Christ should choose to ride upon it, and that that should quietly carry him:

loose him, and bring him; that is, away to me.

Ver. 3. *And if any man say unto you*, etc..] As very likely they would, and it would be strange if they should not say something to them, especially the owners of it:

why do ye this? Why do ye untie the ass, and attempt to carry it away, when it is none of your own, and it belongs to another man?

Say ye that the Lord hath need of him; our Lord and yours, the Lord of heaven and earth, and all things in it; it looks as if this title, “the Lord”, was what Jesus was well known by; (see ^{<BIB>}John 11:28); unless it can be thought, that the owners of the colt were such, that believed in Christ, as is not improbable; and so would at once understand by the language who it was for, and let it go:

and straightway he will send him, hither; as soon as ever he hears that the Lord, by whom he would presently understand Jesus, wanted him for his present purpose; he will send him with all readiness and cheerfulness, without the least hesitation, or making any dispute about it.

Ver. 4. *And they went their way*, etc..] The two disciples went to the village, where Christ sent them, without objecting any difficulties that might present, in the execution of these orders:

and found the colt tied by the door without; in the street, fastened to the door of the owner's house, at the town's end:

in a place where two ways met; to go into and out of the village; at the corner house, where two ways met; so that the place was very public, and such an affair could not be transacted, without being seen:

and they loose him; as soon as ever they came to the place, they immediately began to untie the colt, and were going away with him.

Ver. 5. *And certain of them that stood there*, etc..] The Ethiopic version reads, who walked there; who were either standing hard by, or walking about the place, being inhabitants of it; and either the owners of the colt, or their servants, or both:

said unto them, what do ye loosing the colt? What do ye mean by it? do you intend to take the colt away? what business have you with it? what right have you to do so? and what is your end in it?

Ver. 6. *And they said unto them*, etc..] The very express words,

even as Jesus had commanded: not that these were the words they said, but “the Lord hath need of him”: upon which they said no more, were satisfied and contented, that they should untie the colt, and take it with them:

and they let them go; and the colt with them, very freely; (see Gill on “⁴²⁰⁶Matthew 21:6”).

Ver. 7. *And they brought the colt to Jesus*, etc..] Where he was,

and cast their garments on him; their clothes to be instead of a saddle, for Christ to sit upon:

and he sat upon him; or “Jesus rode on him”, as the Syriac version renders it. The Ethiopic version reads, “they made him to mount him”; that is, the disciples assisted him in getting upon it, and having mounted it, he sat on it without any trouble, though it had never been backed before, and rode on his way to Jerusalem; (see Gill on “⁴²⁰⁷Matthew 21:7”).

Ver. 8. *And many spread their garments in the way*, etc..] Instead of carpets to ride on, and in honour to him as a king:

and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way; in token of joy, as at the feast of tabernacles; (see Gill on “⁴²⁰⁸Matthew 21:8”).

Ver. 9. *And they that went before, and they that followed*, etc..] They that came from Jerusalem to meet him, and they that followed him from Jericho and other parts; which two bodies, the one went before him, and the other followed after him: and

cried, saying, Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; (see Gill on “⁴²⁰⁹Matthew 21:9”).

Ver. 10. *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David*, etc..] It was more usual with the Jews to call Abraham their father; but, because the Messiah was David's son, therefore, with respect to him, they here call him their father: and their meaning is, let the kingdom promised to our father David, and to his seed for ever,

that cometh in the name of the Lord; which is now coming, and appears in the auspicious reign and government of his son, the Messiah, who is clothed with majesty and authority; be prosperous and successful and be

established, and endure for ever; to the glory and happiness of him as king, and of all the subjects of it. Unless the words should be rendered, as by their situation they may be, thus, “blessed be the kingdom that cometh in the name of the Lord, of our father David”; and the sense be, let the kingdom of the Messiah, which is now come, and is set up in his name, who, as God, is David’s Lord, greatly flourish, and long continue; may its king be blessed, and all its subjects happy. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the clause, “in the name of the Lord”; it is also left out in Beza’s ancient copy, and in another; but the Ethiopic version retains it, reading it “in the name of God”. It is added,

Hosanna in the highest: (see Gill on “^{<4210>}Matthew 21:9”).

Ver. 11. *And Jesus entered into Jerusalem*, etc..] this public manner, riding upon an ass, with the multitude attending him, some going before, and others after, crying, “Hosanna” to him:

and into the temple; which he rode up directly to; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the copulative “and”; his great concern being there; and having dismounted, and dismissed the colt, and sent it by proper persons to the owner of it, he went into the temple, into the court of the Gentiles; where he found and overturned the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and healed the lame and the blind:

and when he had looked round about upon all things; that is, in the temple, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and made a thorough visitation of it, and search into it, and corrected what was amiss in it:

and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve; having spent great part of the day in reforming abuses in the temple, in healing diseases, and disputing with the chief priests and Scribes: the evening being come, he did not think fit, for some reasons, to stay in the city; but went out to Bethany, which was near two miles off, and lodged there; (see Gill on “^{<4217>}Matthew 21:17”).

Ver. 12. *And on the morrow*, etc..] The next day early in the morning,

when they were come from Bethany; Christ, and his twelve disciples. The Syriac and Persic versions read, “when he came out of Bethany”; though not alone, but with the twelve disciples, who went with him there, and returned with him, as appears from (“^{<4114>}Mark 11:14), as he and they came

out of that place early in the morning, having ate nothing, before they came from thence,

he was hungry; (see Gill on “⁴²¹⁸Matthew 21:18”).

Ver. 13. *And seeing a fig tree afar off*, etc..] By the wayside, at some distance from him:

having leaves; very large and spreading, which made a great show, as if there might be fruit on it:

he came; unto it; either he went out of his way to it, or having seen it before him a good way off, at length came up to it

if haply he might find any thing thereon; that is, any fruit; for he saw at a distance, there were leaves upon it; and which was the more remarkable, since it was the time of the fig tree just putting forth its tender branches, leaves, and fruit:

and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; no fruit at all upon it, contrary to his expectation as man, and the promising appearance the tree made:

for the time of figs was not [yet]; or, “for it was not the time of figs”; for the word “yet”, is not in the text: and the words seem rather to be a reason, why Christ should not have expected fruit on it, than that he should: but the sense is, either because the time of gathering figs was not come; and since therefore they were not gathered, he might the rather hope to find some on it; or because it was not a kind season for figs, a good fig year; and this tree appearing in such a flourishing condition, might raise his expectation of finding fruit, yet he found none but leaves only; because it was so bad a season for figs, that even the most promising trees had none upon them: or this, tree being of an uncommon sort, though Christ expected to find no fruit on other trees, because the time of common: figs was not come, yet he might hope to, find some on this. Some critics neglecting the accents, render the words, “where he was, it was the season of figs”; (see Gill on “⁴²¹⁹Matthew 21:19”).

Ver. 14. *And Jesus answered and said unto it*, etc..] The fig tree; a Jewish way of speaking, often used when nothing before is said; the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the word “answered”, as they do

also the word “Jesus”; and which is likewise omitted by the Vulgate Latin, though the other is retained:

no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever; which is all one, as if he had said, as the other evangelist does, let no fruit grow on thee; for where no fruit is, none can be had, or eaten of. This tree may not only be an emblem of the Jewish people, who made a great show of religion, and enjoyed a great many privileges; and from whom, speaking after the manner of men, the fruits of good works, righteousness, and holiness, might have been hoped and looked for; when instead thereof, there was nothing but talk about them, and an observance of some insignificant rites and traditions of the “elders”; on which account, utter ruin and destruction ensued; but also of any outward professor of religion, who enjoying the means of grace, and making great pretensions to devotion and piety, it might be expected that he should do good works, well pleasing to God, and bring forth fruit to the glory of his name: whereas he only talks of good works, but does none; at least, no fruits of grace and righteousness are to be found on him; and at the last day, he will be cast as dry wood, as a withered branch, into everlasting burnings, being fit fuel for them.

And his disciples heard [it]; “this saying”, as the Persic version adds, and took notice of it, being in company with him.

Ver. 15. *And they came to Jerusalem*, etc..] The Ethiopic version reads, “he came”; that is, Christ; but not alone, for his disciples were with him: Beza says, that, one exemplar he had met with, adds “again”, and so one of Stephens's copies; for they had been there the day before:

and Jesus went into the temple: the Syriac and Persic versions add, “of God”; into the court of the Gentiles, as he did the preceding day:

and began to cast out them that bought and sold in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; which was done, as Matthew relates, the same day that he made his public entry into Jerusalem: wherefore it is highly probable, that upon Christ's leaving the city, they returned “again”, and were the next morning sitting and doing business in the temple as before; and were drove out again by Christ, who, upon his return, found them there. They “that bought and sold in the temple”, were those that bought and sold lambs for the passover, which was now at hand; and the sheep and oxen for the “Chagiga”, or feast the day following; as well as doves hereafter

mentioned, for new mothers, and such as had fluxes: and that part of the temple where this business was carried on, was in a large space within the area of the temple, where shops were built for that purpose: and by “the money changers”, whose “tables” are said to be “overthrown”, are meant, such as sat at tables to receive the half shekel, who changed those that brought whole shekels, or foreign money: and who had so much for changing, which was called “Kolbon”; from whence they had the name of “Collybistae”, in the text: and “doves”, as before observed, were the offering of the poorer sort of women after birth, at the time of their purification, and of profluvius persons; of which many came from all parts, at the time of the passover: upon which account, there was a great demand for these creatures; and many sat upon seats to sell them, which Christ overturned; (see Gill on ^{“4012”}Matthew 21:12”).

Ver. 16. *And would not suffer that any man*, etc..] He was more strict and severe than the day before; and gave orders, that they should be so far from being allowed to sit and trade in that sacred place, that no man

should carry any vessel through the temple; should make a, thoroughfare of it, by carrying through to any other place, any vessel that was for common use, or any sort of burden whatever: and this they could not well find fault with, nor complain of, since it was agreeable to one of their own canons; for they say ^{f202},

“a man may not go into the mountain of the house, with his staff (in his hands); nor with shoes (on his feet); nor with his girdle, and his money in it; nor with a bag thrown over his shoulders; nor with dust upon his feet; nor might he make it, *ayrdnq*, “a thoroughfare”, and much less spit in it.”

Ver. 17. *And he taught, saying unto them, is it not written*, etc..] In (²⁸⁰⁷Isaiah 56:7).

My house shall be called of all nations, the house of prayer? For not only the Jews went up to the temple to pray, (see ²⁸¹⁰Luke 18:10), but the Gentiles also, who became of the Jewish religion, and had a court built for that purpose; and so the whole temple, from hence, was called an house of prayer: and the meaning is, not only that it should be called so by the Gentiles, but that it should be so to them, and made use of by them as such. Jarchi's note on the clause in (²⁸⁰⁷Isaiah 56:7) is, “not for Israel only, but also for the proselytes.”

But ye have made it a den of thieves; for no other, in our Lord's esteem, were the buyers and sellers of sheep, oxen, and doves, and the money changers, and the priests that encouraged them, and had a profit out of them: now these had their seats, shops, and tables, within the mountain of the house; and even in that part of it, which was assigned to the Gentiles, the nations of the world, who became proselytes, and came up to Jerusalem to worship there at certain times; (see Gill on “⁴²¹³Matthew 21:13”).

Ver. 18. *And the Scribes and chief priests heard it*, etc..] The reproof he gave to the money changers, and buyers, and sellers in the temple; and his strict prohibition that none should carry any vessels through it; and the argument he used from the prophecy of Isaiah, and the sharp rebuke he gave for the profanation of the holy place:

and sought how they might destroy him: they took counsel together to take away his life, for they hated reformation:

for they feared him; lest he should go on to make great changes and alterations among them, which would affect their credit and character, and their gains also, and draw the people after him:

because all the people were astonished at his doctrine; both as to the matter of it, which were such words as never man spake; and, as to the manner of it, being with such majesty, power, and authority, as the Scribes and Pharisees taught not with; and also at the miracles, by which it was confirmed, as well as at the reformation and discipline he was introducing; which was done with such an air of sovereignty and power, as was amazing.

Ver. 19. *And when even was come, he went out of the city.*] Of Jerusalem, as he did the evening before, and for the same reasons: probably he went to Bethany, where he had lodged the last night, with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary; or to the Mount of Olives, where he sometimes spent the night in prayer: the Syriac version renders it, “they went out”; for Christ took his disciples with him, as is evident from the following verse.

Ver. 20. *And in the morning, as they passed by*, etc..] The fig tree; when they returned the next morning from Bethany, or the Mount of Olives, or the place, wherever it was, they had been that night:

they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots; they did not see it immediately wither as it did, nor could they see it, as they went from Jerusalem to this place, because it was then in the evening; but in the morning, as they came along, they observed it; not only that the tender branches and boughs of it, but the trunk and body of the tree, and even the roots of it, were all dried up; so that it was entirely dead, and there was no room ever to expect it would revive, and bear any more fruit.

Ver. 21. *And Peter, calling to remembrance*, etc..] Not so much the tree, and its spreading leaves, and the greatness of it, and the flourishing condition it was in, the other day, as the imprecation of Christ upon it:

saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away; which he observed, as matter of astonishment, and as an instance of Christ's surprising power and authority; (see Gill on ^{“~~4211~~”}Matthew 21:20”).

Ver. 22. *And Jesus answering, saith unto them*, etc..] To all the disciples; for what Peter said, he said in the name of them all; and according to Matthew, the disciples said, “how soon is the fig tree withered away?” To which this is an answer; though the Arabic version renders it, “to him”; as if the words were directed particularly to Peter:

have faith in God; or “the faith of God”, so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; that is, exercise, and make use of that faith which has God for its author, which is the work of God, and of his operation, a free grace gift of his; and which has God for its object; and is supported by his power, and encouraged by his goodness, truth, and faithfulness: and so the Arabic version renders it, “believe in God”; not only that such things may be done, as the drying up a fig tree, but those that are much greater.

Ver. 23. *For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain*, etc..] The Mount of Olives, at, or near which they now were,

be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; that is, of Galilee, which was nearest, and yet many miles off:

and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; not only as to removing a mountain, and casting it into the sea, but any thing equally difficult;

he shall have whatsoever he saith: whatever he commands shall be done; (see Gill on “⁴¹²²Matthew 21:21”).

Ver. 24. *Therefore I say unto you*, etc..] For encouragement in prayer more particularly, without which nothing should be attempted, and especially which is above the power of nature, and is of a miraculous kind:

whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray; that is, according to the revealed will of God, is for the confirmation of his Gospel, and for the glory of his name:

believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them]; the petitions that are desired, and the things asked in them: that is, be as much assured of having them, as if you had already received them, and you shall have them; for the sense can never be, that they should believe they received them before they had them; this would be a contradiction in terms; and Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's copies read it, “believe that ye shall receive”, as in (⁴¹²²Matthew 21:22), and so the Vulgate Latin version; with which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, which render it, “believe that ye shall enjoy”, or “obtain”; and the Syriac version, “believe that ye are about to receive”; and great faith it is so to believe; and this is the prayer of faith; (see ⁴¹⁵⁴1 John 5:14,15).

Ver. 25. *And when ye stand praying*, etc..] Are about to engage in that work, or are engaged in it, performing it in such a posture; for standing was an usual posture in praying; (see Gill on “⁴¹⁶⁵Matthew 6:5”);

forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. The sense is, that if, while a man is praying, it comes into his mind that such an one has committed a trespass against him, has done him an injury, of which he has just reason to complain; but instead of complaining of it before God, and calling upon him to avenge his cause, he should immediately in his heart, and from his heart, forgive him, even though he is not present to acknowledge his sin, and ask his pardon; and such an one may expect forgiveness of God, and a manifestation of it to his soul; which is one the things he is constantly praying for, as his daily case makes it necessary: not that it is to be understood as though his for, giving the person that has offended him, is the cause, or condition, of his receiving remission of sin at the hand of God; for then it would not be through the blood of Christ, and according to the riches of his grace; but this points at a

temper and disposition of mind well pleasing to God, and describes persons who may expect this favour from him; (see Gill on “⁴⁰⁶⁴Matthew 6:14”).

Ver. 26. *But if ye do not forgive*, etc..] Freely and fully, such as have trespassed against you, remit the debts they owe, and pass by the offences and injuries done you, and put up with every affront and indignity:

neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses; that is, such persons do not appear to have any true, or right notions of forgiveness; nor is there any evidence that their hearts are duly affected, or truly impressed with a sense of it; nor can they, upon their own principles and conduct, expect it: not but that to whomsoever God stands in the relation of a Father, and they are his children by adopting grace; these he pities and pardons, Christ's sake; the same covenant which contains the blessing of adoption, provides for pardoning mercy, and a non-remembrance of sin; the same persons that are predestinated to the adoption of children by Christ, and whom he has redeemed, that they might receive it, have the forgiveness of their sins, according to the riches of God's grace; for redemption and forgiveness of sins go together; and as many as are the children of God by faith in Christ, by the same faith receive the remission of sins; and without a view of pardon through the blood of Christ, a child of God cannot draw nigh to its heavenly Father, with that boldness, and cheerfulness, and filial fear it should; but there is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared; to whomsoever God stands in the relation of a Covenant God and Father, to them he manifests himself as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin: unless the word “father” here not to be taken for such a special relation of grace, but only as expressive of him as the God of nature and providence, who has made; and takes care of all his creatures; in which sense he is the Father of all: as it is said, “have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?” (⁴⁰⁶⁵Malachi 2:10); and so “our heavenly Father”, or “our Father” which is in heaven, may be so called only from the place where he dwells; and not from the grace he bestows on men, making them partakers of his heavenly gifts and calling, and blessing them in heavenly places, or things in Christ Jesus: in the former view of him it will not necessarily follow, that he does forgive sin, whereas under the latter consideration of him it will; for forgiveness is one of the heavenly gifts and things which he blesses his children with; (see Gill on “⁴⁰⁶⁵Matthew 6:15”).

Ver. 27. *And they come again to Jerusalem*, etc..] The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, “he came”, which must be understood with his disciples; for they never parted from him till he was apprehended in the garden. Luke says, (^{<2711>}Luke 20:1), that it was “on one of those days”; and the Persic version here reads, “on another day”: it was the day after the cursing of the fig tree, and two days after his public entrance into Jerusalem:

and as he was walking in the temple; not alone, but his disciples with him, and a multitude of people, whom he was teaching and preaching the Gospel to, as he walked to and fro; and whilst he was there employed,

there come to him the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders: the Jewish sanhedrim; for of these that great council of the nation consisted; (see Gill on “^{<42123>}Matthew 21:23”).

Ver. 28. *And say unto him, by what authority dost thou do these things?* etc..] Enter into the temple, as if he was Lord of it; and correct in such a magisterial way every thing he thought an abuse in it; do the miracles he did, as healing the lame, and blind; and take upon him to instruct the people, a work he was now engaged in:

and who gave thee this authority to do these things? (see Gill on “^{<42123>}Matthew 21:23”).

Ver. 29. *And Jesus answered and said unto them*, etc..] Being not in the least intimidated by such a body of men:

I will also ask of you one question; or “one word”, or “one thing”; *λογος*, here answers to the Hebrew word *rbd*, which signifies both “word” and “thing”:

and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things; (see Gill on “^{<42124>}Matthew 21:24”).

Ver. 30. *The baptism of John*, etc..] The doctrine of which he was the first preacher, and the ordinance of which he was the first administrator:

was it from heaven, or of men? was it of divine or of human institution?

answer me; directly and plainly, without any shuffling, or evasion: it is a fair question, and may be answered; and the answer to it our Lord suggests would naturally lead to a proper one to their question; (see Gill on “^{<42125>}Matthew 21:25”).

Ver. 31. *And they reasoned with themselves saying,* etc..] Privately; perhaps, they withdrew at a little distance for a short time, and consulted among themselves what answer to return; and the amount of their reasonings were this;

if we shall say from heaven, he will say, why then did ye not believe him? that is, should they say that John had a divine commission for what he said and did, they were aware that Christ would reply, why did not ye give credit to him? and had you done so, seeing he testified of me, you would have had no occasion to have put the above question; (see Gill on “⁴¹²⁵Matthew 21:25”).

Ver. 32. *But if we shall say, of men,* etc..] That John's baptism was an human invention, and he had no authority from God to preach and administer it,

they feared the people; lest being enraged thereby they should, at once, rise up, and destroy them:

for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed; a real prophet, one truly sent from God, and had his commission and credentials from him: this was the general sentiment of the people; (see Gill on “⁴¹²⁶Matthew 21:26”).

Ver. 33. *And they answered and said unto Jesus,* etc..] Being reduced by this dilemma to the greatest streight and difficulty;

we cannot tell: they could, if they would, but they did not care to tell; they knew if they did, they should expose themselves one way or other:

and Jesus answering, saith unto them, neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things; (see Gill on “⁴¹²⁷Matthew 21:27”).