

Let That King In

Mark 11:1-11 April 22, 2026

In 2022, Elon Musk shocked everyone by buying Twitter. When he arrived at headquarters as boss that first day, he made some bold moves. He threw out four top executives and pledged to get rid of 75% of the staff.¹ Most famously, he arrived at the front door holding a kitchen sink, tweeting, "Entering Twitter HQ - Let that sink in!" One reporter noted, "Elon isn't afraid to commit to the bit."²

The truth is, Elon's big gesture almost didn't happen. He sent his team to go get a sink, but due to miscommunication and the strangeness of the request, Musk said the store almost refused to sell them one.

In our text tonight, Jesus arrives to Jerusalem as Messiah and King for the first time. In earlier chapters of Mark, Jesus frequently demanded that people *not* proclaim Who He is and what He did for them, but now that phase is over. The King has arrived.

On His way into the royal city, He sends a team of disciples to go and get a special item - one with great significance. Elon carrying a sink into Twitter HQ falls into the "antics" category as far as I'm concerned. Jesus wasn't joking around - these weren't antics - this was *prophetic*. The Son of David had arrived and, though He came in peace, He would be confronted, betrayed, conspired against, and ultimately killed.

Mark 11 through 16 focuses on what we call Passion Week. *Forty percent* of the book all about these last few days before Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.³ He's been approaching for a few passages now, but the final act starts in verse 1 of chapter 11.

Mark 11:1-3 - ¹When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and told them, "Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here right away.'"

Bethany is about 2 miles from Jerusalem. Bethphage is about 1 mile.⁴ The Mount of Olives was a ridge east of Jerusalem with a valley in-between. These geographical markers have significance. First of all, Bethphage literally means, "House of unripe figs,"⁵ which foreshadows what happens in the very next set of verses.

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidjeans/2022/10/28/elon-musk-twitter-employee-panic/>

² <https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/celebrity/articles/elon-musk-comes-clean-sink-040201062.html>

³ Ben Witherington *The Gospel Of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*

⁴ John Walvoord and Roy Zuck *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*

⁵ Walvoord, Zuck

But it's the Mount of Olives that grabs our attention tonight. You see, in Ezekiel 11, something dramatic and terrible happens: Because of the sin of the nation, the glory of God departs from the Temple and from Jerusalem. Guess where it stops? *The Mount of Olives*.⁶ But here the Lord God returns *from* the Mount of Olives. He comes as a Savior, a Suffering Servant, to rescue not just the Jews, but *all* mankind from our sin. He comes to *restore* the relationship between God and man.

Now listen: Jesus *knew* that He was the Messiah. Recently the ladies of *The View* made news when one of them said Jesus *never* claimed to be the Messiah. That's absolutely untrue. He definitely did. And this scene is one of those times. He is *purposefully* fulfilling prophecy in this scene.

There were many prophecies that Jesus fulfilled without trying. Like being born of a virgin or being from Nazareth. Those weren't of His own accomplishment. But at other times, He carefully, purposefully accomplished Biblical prophecy which foretold the Messiah. God loves to reveal.

In this scene, the prophecies in question are found in Zechariah 9 and Genesis 49. Both speak about *how* the Christ would arrive to Judah and Jerusalem.

Arriving on a colt would stand out. *Many* people were on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Culturally, it was expected that if you *could* walk, you *should* walk.⁷ But Jesus pauses and changes His normal behavior. We've *never* seen Him riding an animal before. He always walked everywhere unless He was on a boat. Now He sends His guys to go get this donkey to not only signify that He's the Messiah of Genesis and Zechariah, but to demonstrate that He is a holy King coming in peace.⁸

It was significant that He used a colt that had never been ridden. First, it would signal this animal was being used for a sacred purpose. In the Law of Moses, there were certain rituals and sacrifices set apart for animals that had never been ridden or worked in a normal way. This was not just a convenient way to get into town. Jesus was doing a sacred, holy, divine work.

Second, the Mishnah taught that a king's mount could not be ridden by anyone else.⁹ So not only was He saying He is holy, but that He is a King.

The third significance is when a king came on a donkey, it wasn't to make war. It was for peace. So, Jesus is making a very big statement here. He's living out a prophetic parable for all to see.

Mark 11:4-6 - ⁴ So they went and found a colt outside in the street, tied by a door. They untied it, ⁵ and some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶ They answered them just as Jesus had said; so they let them go.

⁶ Ezekiel 11:23

⁷ R.T. France *The Gospel Of Mark*

⁸ Robert Utley *The Gospel According To Peter: Mark And I & II Peter*

⁹ Morna Hooker *The Gospel According To Saint Mark*

We don't know which two disciples this was, but good on them. They're obedient, they're bold, they're brave. This *could've* gone sideways if it didn't work out. A donkey normally cost between 2 and 10 months' wages.¹⁰ So, walking off with someone else's colt is like grand theft donko.

And the message Jesus gave them to say was a little light on detail. They had to trust His foreknowledge. They had to trust in providence. They had to trust His leading. And they did!

What's wonderful about this scene is that here we have this all important detail: Jesus needs to enter Jerusalem on not just a donkey but the *colt* of a donkey. Not *just* a colt, but a colt on whom no one has ridden. Not *just* a colt on whom no one has ridden, but - given the prophecy of Genesis 49 - it actually matters that the colt be tied up and be *untied* when the moment comes. *This* is what was required to properly prophetically accomplish this monumental arrival into Jerusalem. And, *in this moment*, Jesus shares the activity, the opportunity, the responsibility with His followers. With the two disciples. With the owner of the donkey. With the other people standing around. He brings believers into the work in meaningful ways. *That* is grace. That's His heart for us. He makes us *instruments* of His glorious activity.

Providence *still* includes us in God's work. He doesn't have to but He *wants* to. The question is: What is God leading me to be a part of? It's not nothing! We are *still* emissaries of the coming King.

Mark 11:7-8 - ⁷ They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their clothes on the road, and others spread leafy branches cut from the fields.

They roll out a red carpet for Jesus. Different Gospels use different words for what sort of plants the people were putting down. Some were dropping straw, some rushes or leaves, others large palm branches.¹¹ It was an impromptu and makeshift moment of worship and devotion for the Lord.

The people didn't understand *all* of what was going on, but they realized Jesus was not just another pilgrim. They do for Him what was done for a king back in 2 Kings chapter 9. It had been done for Simon Maccabaeus in the inter-testamental period when he came into Jerusalem.¹²

Some of the pilgrims on the road would've been traveling with palm fronds, because that was part of the Feast of Tabernacles. Many would have brought the palm branches from Jericho - 17 miles away.¹³ But imagine: As Jesus gets onto the colt, as those passages of the Old Testament came together in your mind after years of reminder and memorization, *suddenly* you're there, holding a palm branch and you realize that the Reason the Feast exists is in your midst! The palm is not for the Temple, it's for *Him!* The day you spent your life singing about, the *Person* that the Feasts and the Temple and the Psalms had been preparing you for for generations was there, with you on the road. *Of course* they broke out into acts of praise and shouts of joy!

¹⁰ Craig Keener *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Second Edition)*

¹¹ Marvin Vincent *Word Studies In The New Testament*

¹² Walter Wessel *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke*

¹³ Keener

Meanwhile, the King of kings is a King of love and of grace. He did not demand golden fabric or even red velvet. He was blessed to be honored with palm branches and soft leaves.

Christian, *you have* devotion and worship that can please the Lord, that can glorify and honor the Lord. It's not about the *value*, it's about your heart. But do not refuse to give Him the praise and the devotion and the sacrifice that He is owed.

Mark 11:9-10 - ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted: Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

They're quoting Psalm 118 here. It's one of the Hallel Psalms. There are three sets of Hallel Psalms and Psalm 118 specifically was sung every year at the Feast of Tabernacles and at Passover.¹⁴ And now they get to sing it to the Passover Lamb, Himself - God Who came to tabernacle with us.

Hosanna means "oh, save us now!"¹⁵ And so, though it's clear no one fully knew that Jesus' saving work was going to lead to the cross, the expectation is high. Luke explains that there were many people who thought the Kingdom of God was going to appear right away.¹⁶

Apparently the Romans knew that some were calling Jesus a King, but *clearly* they did not understand all the implications of what Jesus was doing that day. Because, had they understood, Jesus would've been immediately arrested.¹⁷

There's good evidence indicating that "He Who comes" is also a Messianic Title, by the way.¹⁸ So, here's a group of people who want salvation and Kingdom.

What they *didn't* understand is how the King would bring the Kingdom. This is what the last number of passages have been about. Jesus trying to help His followers understand what the Kingdom required. How the Messiah must *first* suffer and die. How we don't go out conquering, but serving. How salvation comes first *personally*, then one day it will come nationally and globally.

Sadly, we'll see that when the saving work that they're praying for with every hosanna finally happens, everyone has abandoned Jesus, His countrymen stand at the foot of the cross reviling Him, not worshiping Him. They wanted political salvation. But they needed *propitiation* for sin.

But in *this* moment, something huge has happened. This is a truly historic, prophetic, *powerful* moment as *the* King enters the city. If the people didn't praise, the very *rocks* would've cried out. This was a once-in-human-history manifestation of God's intervention in human history. And then...

¹⁴ Clifton Allen *Matthew-Mark*

¹⁵ Walvoord, Zuck

¹⁶ Luke 19:11

¹⁷ Keener

¹⁸ James Brooks *The New American Commentary, Volume 23: Mark*

Mark 11:11 - ¹¹ He went into Jerusalem and into the temple. After looking around at everything, since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

That's it? It's kind of anti-climactic. He goes to the Temple. It's late in the day because they just walked 17 miles from Jericho, no one is there. Jesus looks around the 37 acre Temple complex, then He says, "Alright, let's walk 2 *more* miles back to Bethany."

Why not *do* something? Well, He's going to do a lot, but it's all on a specific timeline. He's *going* to cleanse the temple, but He wants to do so at a time when a lot of people will see it happen and realize what has become of God's house. And then He will face wave after wave of opposition, and day by day He will come closer to Calvary, the reason He came. The King had arrived, but before being enthroned, He would first be rejected, beaten, killed, and entombed. The King's *first* coming was not about conquering the city of Jerusalem. It wasn't about taking over. It was about taking our sins upon Himself and bearing them away.

Forbes magazine wrote that the day Elon came to Twitter, "Chaos reigned."¹⁹ He flexed the power of his authority, making it clear who was in charge of the office.

Here in Mark, as the King of kings arrives in His city, *meekness* reigns. He came in peace. He came with restraint. Knowing all that was going on behind the scenes, knowing all that would happen. Yet He held back the power of His wrath which He would've been *right* to pour out not only in the Temple or Jerusalem, but the whole world. Consider all He could've demanded. All that was *owed* Him. Consider what humanity deserved. And yet, at His *first coming*, He came in grace, in peace, in compassion.

What if you came home tonight and there are evil, criminal squatters trying to take over your house? That's what had happened to Jesus' Father's house, right? Now, He *does* drive out the money changes the next day, but before the cross Christ moves with meekness.

But understand: Meekness is not *weakness*. He was a Servant, but He was not subservient. There's a cultural idea out there today that Jesus' highest command was "Thou shalt be nice." And that all He did was go around being cool with everybody and accepting everything everyone did. But it's not true. He called people to repentance. He set them *free* from sin and commanded them not to return to it. Yes, in His *first coming*, He came in meekness, but in His second coming, He does not come like a King at peacetime. The *next* time He returns, He comes not on the colt of a donkey, but on a charging white horse, with a sword in His mouth.

Our part is to enthrone Him in our lives. Not to reject His rule over us. Our part is to give Him our praise and our worship and our hearts. And to be used as instruments of His work according to His leading.

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/forbes/posts/new-on-elon-musks-first-day-as-twitters-owner-chaos-reigns-and-employees-fear-fo/10160622993092509/>