

*approaching Jerusalem | entered Jerusalem* :: in Mark this is the first time Jesus enters Jerusalem.

**Bethphage** :: this name probably derives from the Aramaic [*bet pagge*] meaning “house of unripe figs.” The reference to this village is placed either intentionally or by chance at the beginning of a section in which Jesus cruses a fig tree (Mark 11:14-16).

**MOUNT OF OLIVES** :: a low ridge of three hills, facing the Old City of Jerusalem. The two First Testament passages that mention this site associate in with the eschatological manifestation of God’s kingship through military triumph. See Zechariah 14:15, 9; Josephus War 2.262; Anti 20.169-170 and with David’s trail of tears flight from Jerusalem after being rejected by the Israelites in 2 Samuel 15:30.

**a colt**:: in classical Greek this word indicates the foal of a horse and by extension any animal. Donkeys were much more apt to be left in a village square than were horses. The former was an ordinary beast of burden used by many. The later was rare and quite expensive, generally reserved for military or elite use.

**a colt that has never been ridden** :: An animal ridden by a monarch in the ancient world was ridden by no one else. It could be a connection with the description in Luke 23:53 and John 19:41 that the grave of Jesus has never been used before, which was expensive and rare for a peasant to like him to be laid in. This description draws from Zechariah 9:9 which pictures the Davidic king riding into Jerusalem on a “new colt”. *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”* Zechariah 9:9

**spread leafy branches** :: this word is related to that used for the bouquet of interwoven branches waved in the celebration of Sukkot – of the Feast of Tabernacles, related to Psalm 118.

*“Hosanna!”* :: the word HOSANNA means “save us!” The cry of the crowd is a compilation of:  
“<sup>25</sup>Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success! <sup>26</sup>Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord We bless you from the house of the Lord.” - **Psalm 118:25-26**

*“<sup>10</sup> And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly,<sup>11</sup> from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. <sup>12</sup> When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings.”* - **2 Samuel 7:11-14**

## Mark 11:1-11

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<sup>46</sup> They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaueus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “**Jesus, Son of David**, have mercy on me!” <sup>48</sup> Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “**Son of David**, have mercy on me!” <sup>49</sup> Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” <sup>50</sup> So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” <sup>52</sup> Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

<sup>1</sup>When they were *approaching Jerusalem*, at **Bethphage** and **Bethany**, near the **MOUNT OF OLIVES**, [Jesus] sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup> and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there **a colt that has never been ridden**; untie it and bring it.

<sup>3</sup> If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’” <sup>4</sup> They went away and found a **colt** tied

near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it,

<sup>5</sup> some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the **colt**?” <sup>6</sup> They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. <sup>7</sup> Then they

brought the **colt** to Jesus and **THREW THEIR CLOAKS ON**

**IT**; and he sat on it. <sup>8</sup> Many people **SPREAD THEIR**

**CLOAKS ON THE ROAD**, and others **spread leafy branches**

that they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup> Then those who went

ahead and those who followed were shouting,

*“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the*

*Lord! <sup>10</sup> Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor*

*David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”*

<sup>11</sup> Then he *entered Jerusalem* and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to **Bethany** with the twelve.

<sup>12</sup> On the following day, when they came from **Bethany**, he was hungry. <sup>13</sup> Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. <sup>14</sup> He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

<sup>1</sup>It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; <sup>2</sup> for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

<sup>3</sup> While [Jesus] was at **Bethany** in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, **a woman** came with an alabaster jar of very costly *ointment of nard*, and she broke open the jar and poured *the ointment* on his head.

<sup>4</sup> But **some were there** who said to one another in anger, "Why was the *ointment* wasted in this way? <sup>5</sup> For this *ointment* could have been sold for **more than three hundred denarii**, and the money given to the poor." And **they scolded her**. <sup>6</sup> But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? *She has performed a good service for me.* <sup>7</sup> For **YOU ALWAYS HAVE THE POOR WITH YOU**, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup> She has done what she could; she has **anointed** my body beforehand for its burial. <sup>9</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever **the good news** is proclaimed in the whole world, *what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.*"

<sup>10</sup> Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. <sup>11</sup> When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

**Bethany**:: this is the same town as in Mark 11:1 to where Jesus is headed when he parades into Jerusalem on the colt.

**a woman** :: John 12:1-3 specifies her as Mary, the sister of Lazarus.

*ointment of nard*:: the description in Mark 14:3 uses the same Greek words as that in John 12:3. It's rare for John's gospel to have a vocabulary agreement with the other three gospels.

Most ancient perfumes were oil based, unlike today's which are alcohol based. The fattier the base the more stable the perfume. It's for this reason that it's more of a ointment than a liquid.

**some were there** :: Matthew makes these anonymous objectors in Mark "some" into disciples (see Matthew 26:8), John says that the complainer was Judas (see John 12:4); whereas Luke (maybe like Mark) makes the complainer into an anonymous Pharisee (see Luke 7:39).

**more than three hundred denarii**:: according to Matthew 20:2 a denarius was a typical wage for a Palestinian agricultural worker for a day's work. This seems to have been the case in Egypt as well. So this perfume was worth nearly a year's wages: *quite extravagant*.

*She has performed a good service for me. | what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.* :: This action could be a memorial, like a tombstone, or a liturgical memorial, such as a sacrificial offering.

**YOU ALWAYS HAVE THE POOR WITH YOU** :: Jesus seems to be implying that donations of money to the poor and the anointing of Jesus are both charitable acts. Why does one take precedence over the other? His statement seems to echo **Deuteronomy 15:11** "*Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land."*"

**anointed** :: it was traditional to anoint (the Hebrew word for "anoint" is "messiah") a king in the 1<sup>st</sup> Testament. This usually done by pouring oil or perfume over the head of the enthroned one. See 1 Samuel 10:1,2; 2 Kings 9:3, 6 and 1 Kings 10:2, 10

**the good news** :: the gospel

**they scolded her** :: it's curious that they condemn her for what Jesus then commends. She seems to see clearly while they remain blind. (Mark 10:52 "<sup>52</sup> *Jesus said to Bartimaeus, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.*"