

## A LIGHT OF THE GENTILES

Study #5 – “The King speaks Peace to the Nations - The enacted Parable”

Reading: Mark 11

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Brother chairman and my dear brethren and sisters and young people.

There were some in Israel who waited for the fulfillment of Zechariah 9 and verse 9; 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh, and He would be just, He would have salvation, or be saving Himself, He would be lowly, and He would be riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass, and would ultimately cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem and the battle bow would be cut off: and He would speak peace unto the nations and His dominion would be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth'. And there would be those who were waiting for the time, when there Messiah would ride into that city in victory; and that time came in the record of Mark chapter 11. And there were those who saw the stark contrast between the events of that chapter, and the time when Alexander the Great, as he went forth in his conquests of the east, came to Jerusalem and having seen in a dream on the previous night, apparently, (according to those who are suppose to know), a vision of priests coming out dressed in white garments, to submit to him as he came to dominate that land. it is said, that Alexander got down from his valiant steed, Bucephalus, which no man could ride but he, and he prostrated himself before the priests and lead the horse into Jerusalem, riderless. There were those who saw the contrast between Alexander the Great, the conqueror of the earth who could not control himself, who was prostrated before the gates of Jerusalem; and the One who came and that was meek and lowly, having salvation, because He overcame Himself, and conquered a city.

And you and I can see, not just in Zechariah 9 and verse 9, a prophecy of the time when the Lord Jesus Christ will ride victoriously into Jerusalem in the chariot of Yahweh, even the glorified saints, but we can see in it, of course, the intentions of God in relation to Gentile salvation. And so this morning, we want to have a look at the enacted parable of Mark 11. When we talk about an enacted parable we mean, a parable not so much in words, although there are many words spoken, which we shall examine carefully, but rather a parable in which certain things are acted out. It was what the Lord did at this time that was significant; it was the way that He did it, and by the end I hope we shall realize this, that of the most excruciating period of His entire life, in the last week of His life, between the 10th and the 14th of Abib, the Lord Jesus Christ was thinking about the salvation of the Gentiles. And here He was, who came to confirm the promises made to the fathers, a minister to the Jews, but He hadn't forgotten the mercy to Abraham. He hadn't forgotten that the time would very shortly come, when the Gentiles would glorify God for His mercy; for the preaching of His apostles, and deliberately sets about the task, of enacting a parable in which Gentile salvation is set forth so graphically that it's impossible to miss. Yes, it's impossible to miss! and every single phrase of the last few verses of Mark 10 and certainly the first half of chapter 11, is designed to draw us to that conclusion.

And so this morning we have the opportunity to do something we didn't do, in our previous sessions; we can leave our bible basically open at one chapter; we'll leave it on 3 or 4 occasions in the course of the session, but basically we'll stay here in Mark 11, and follow the phrases of this chapter through, step by step, to see the way in which this parable unfolds before our eyes. Let us begin in Mark chapter 10.

We know that the Gentiles are on Christ's mind, for instance, in verse 42, when He speaks to His disciples about exercising lordship. He said, 'ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them', so the Gentiles were upon His mind. And then in the end of that particular passage in verse 45 we read, 'For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many', now I know there's an alternative rendition of that which may have a different meaning, but as far as I'm concerned it means exactly what it says, 'He came to give His life a ransom for many', Jew and Gentile and immediately we find the

record plunging into the enacted parable. As the Lord comes to Jericho for the last time in verse 46 of Mark 10, He had gone out of His way to go through that city. Yes, it was one of the ways in which you could make your way to Jerusalem, at the time of the feast; it wasn't quite so crowded as the way down through Shechem. It came from the north and across the mountains of Judaea; there was no real reason other than the fact the Lord was deliberately setting forth a parable, that He should have come through Jericho. Why does the record state that He came to Jericho?

We read did we not, for instance, Judges chapter 3 and verse 13. In Judges chapter 1 you'll recall, we read that Jericho was the city of palm trees, and you can answer those references, the 34th chapter of Deuteronomy and verse 3, and 2 Chronicles 28 and verse 15, they all tell us that Jericho was known as the city of palm trees. In the previous session we mentioned that a palm tree is a symbol of the Gentiles, in fact, it is a symbol of all nations. Remember Exodus 15:27? when Israel came to Elim the place of the mighty ones, they received a vision of the kingdom, and there they saw twelve wells of water (the glorified kingdom age it's talking about, when Israel will be redeemed. When the nations will acknowledge the power of Yahweh in the earth, and they will draw water from the 12 tribes of Israel. It will be ensconced in the land of promise) There was the vision that was given to them of the kingdom, and there were 70 palm trees around those 12 wells of water. 70 we know to be the number of the Gentiles, and the palm trees obviously a symbol of the nations in that context. We'll have more to say about that a little later on.

So here we have Jesus deliberately coming to the 'city of palm trees', and who did He find in that city? Well, the record tells us that as He was going out of Jericho, with His disciples and a great number of people, 'blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging'. Every phrase of that verse is pregnant with meaning. He found there a blind man; the record of Matthew tells us that there were in fact, two blind men, Matthew 20:29 and 34, record that there were 2 blind men, who were both healed, but Mark decides to tell us only about one! Why? Why just chose the one, and why tell us his name? and why tell us the name twice? as I said, there is a fullness of meaning here that must not be missed. He's in the city of palm trees, Jericho, the citadel of Gentile power, that was bowled over by the power of God, with a great earthquake, as the walls collapsed and everything in that city was devoted to Yahweh, except one Gentile family who had faith! Every single thing in that city was devoted. Why? because Yahweh was saying, 'Jericho represents the whole land; you take that and the rest is gone; it's yours', and therefore, it was a symbol of the Gentiles and of their power. And here is the Lord finding a blind man who has a name that means, 'the son of the polluted', that's what BarTimaueus means, the son of the polluted. And why would you imagine that it is repeated, BarTimaueus is the equivalent of what we might have if you were using the Hebrew language, 'ben Timaeus', 'bar' being the Greek equivalent to 'ben'. He found a blind man called 'the son of Timaeus', the son of Timaeus, the son of the polluted, the son of the polluted, and when you have duplication, you have force, remember the parables of Joseph? (Because if it's double unto thee, the thing is sure), therefore we have here, an emphasis that he was the son of the polluted; now he might have been a Jew, but he is portrayed as being a type of the Gentiles. He was the son of the polluted and the Jews regarded the Gentiles to be such.

And where was this man? He was by a highway side, and the Lord Jesus Christ uses the highway in Matthew 22 and verse 10 in the parable of the wedding feast; He uses the highway and the byway as a sign or a type of the place where the Gentiles would be found, and the apostles were sent forth into the highways of humanity, that they might call forth Gentiles, to come to the wedding of the Lord Jesus Christ. there's no doubt that we have Gentiles being set forth before us, and what was this blind man doing? He was begging, and to beg, you have to step down from the pride of man and indulge those things which make every other man look at you. To beg is very difficult, verse 16, 'I cannot beg said the steward who had abused his privileges', I cannot beg, I simply can't bring myself to do it! but when you and I were blind Gentiles, the son of the polluted, we spent most of our time begging! You have a look with me at Ephesians chapter 4, this is one of those occasions when we shall go out of the record of Mark 11, and have a look at a very appropriate passage of scripture, which talks about our state before we came to the truth. In Ephesians chapter 4, we read in verse 17, 'This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as Gentiles walk (other can

be omitted, we are not Gentiles today) Paul has explained in chapter 2 you'll recall, in verses 10 to 12, that there was a time that we were outside the covenants of promise, but that isn't the case now; we are now the Israel of God and should be Israelites indeed), 'but we should not walk as Gentiles walk (we use to be among them) in the vanity or emptiness of our minds, Having the understanding darkened (BarTimaeus was blind and so were you and I, we couldn't see) being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness or hardness of our hearts'. what were we doing? Verse 19, 'who being passed feeling (past sensitivity) had given themselves over unto lasciviousness or licence, to work all uncleanness with greediness' (or you might use another word, with begging). We were beggars, begging to have the flesh and its desires fulfilled. To have the cravings of our flesh fulfilled; we were hungry for lust, and and that was our state; and here was blind BarTimaeus, back in Mark chapter 10, by the highway side begging, and the Lord extracts him from that. This man must have known something about Jesus of Nazareth because in verse 47, 'when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and to say, Jesus, thou son of David, I'm in a pitiful state; have mercy on me'!

We've seen the understanding of David in relation to Gentiles. We need say no more about it, 'And when many charged him that he should hold his peace (as the Jews denied the gospel to the Gentiles and said, 'What are you doing going out there? we are the exclusive race of Yahweh!) 'but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me'(and the tabernacle of David was to be spread out over the Gentiles as well as the Jews). And Jesus who was now on His way to Jerusalem, He was now about 5 days from crucifixion, He was steadfastly going towards that city; He'd set face to do so, and He stood still for a moment in verse 49, He stood still in the way of the cross, that He might introduce into that way, a blind Gentile, who represents the rest of us.

And they called the blind man (and even as the apostles were to go forth amongst the Gentiles and to call them and say, 'be of good comfort') 'rise, He calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment of filthy rags (can you imagine what a beggars clothing would be like? He couldn't even see what they were like. Filthy rags he had) 'And casting away his filthy rags he rose and came to Yahweh's salvation. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And the blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight (sight or eyes of course, are a symbol of intelligence, and he had his mind a mind that was empty and vacant in ignorance of the things of the truth, symbolized by the fact that his eyes could not see, and he wanted to have his intelligence enlightened by the truth, and Jesus taught him, and healed him, and He said to him, 'Go thy way', verse 52, (the words 'thy way' can be crossed out, they're not there). 'Go', because he wasn't to go on his own way anymore; he was to go in the way of the cross, because the Lord says in that verse, 'Go, thy faith has made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and he followed Jesus in the way'. What way was that? Where was Jesus going?

He was going to His crucifixion; He was, as it were bearing the cross from Jericho to Jerusalem; He was going up to die and in was in that way, that the enlightened Gentile, at least in time, went with Him. 'No man can be my disciple except he take up his cross daily and follow Me, and walk in that way', do you see the introduction to the enacted parable of Mark chapter 11? Like playing with the mind of Christ was in this whole transaction. Then we come to verse 1 of the 11th chapter, 'And when they came nigh to Jerusalem (this was the 10th of Abib) unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, He sendeth forth two of His disciples'; now as I said, nearly every phrase is critical and we need to have it properly ordered in our minds. First of all, we need to mention, that Matthew 21 and verse 1 tells us that the Lord came to Bethphage first. Bethphage was some little distance from the town of Bethany; little villages they were, over the rise of the mount of Olives, not very far apart. Now, we know that the Lord normally stayed in the house of Martha, and Mary and Lazarus at Bethany. But the record is deliberate in Matthew 21 and verse 1, when it tells us that He first came to Bethphage. And Bethphage is put first here in verse 1 of chapter 11.

I want you to get the meanings of these names firmly entrenched in your minds, if not in your bible, it's not a bad idea to have them written in your bible. Bethphage means 'the house of unripe figs'; now I've got a way of remembering these, 'phage' sounds somewhat like 'fig' doesn't it? So I

remember the house of unripe figs by saying it that way, Bethphage, whereas 'Bethany' means, according to Strong, 'the house of dates or the house of date palms' because the date is the fruit of the palm tree, or a particular kind of palm tree. Now isn't that significant? we've been talking about the palm tree as a symbol of Gentiles, and we all know that the fig tree is a symbol of Israel, so here we have two houses, the word 'beth' meaning 'a house'; the house of unripe figs, the house of Israel and the house of the Gentiles, Bethany, and I remember that's the house of the Gentiles by the fact that the word 'any' in English means 'all', any or all. Bethany, the house of 'all' the house of the Gentiles; see the way of memorizing it? Now, it's important that we do that because as we go through the record, the Lord deliberately does things in these two places, that He wants us to understand the relevance of sending forth a light to the Gentiles. So he comes first to the house of Israel, the house of unripe figs, 'I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and so He came to them first, the Jew first then Gentile was Yahweh's order.

And it wasn't until later on that He came to Bethany. Now both of these little villages were on the mount of Olives. Here we have the third tree; we've got the fig, we've got the date palm, and now we have an olive tree. What does the olive tree represent? Well, all of your minds go to Romans chapter 11, don't they? for in Romans 11 and verses 17 and 24, we are told plainly, that Yahweh has decided to use the olive tree as a symbol both of Jew and of Gentile. Recall what Paul says? He says the nation of Israel was in fact, a cultivated olive tree; and we the Gentiles were the wild olive that were taken and grafted in to the cultivated olive tree. And Zechariah chapter 4 is a vision of the time when the two anointed ones of Yahweh, the two olive trees from which flow the oil which will give light in the kingdom age, will be joined together in Christ, in glory. And there they sit, the olive tree of Israel and the olive tree of the Gentiles together, in the kingdom. So here we have the olive tree standing for 'the uniting of Jew and Gentile'. Now, isn't that remarkable! and the Lord comes from Jericho, the city of the Gentiles, on His way to Jerusalem, that He might make a great sacrifice, and He comes to the house of Israel first, the house of unripe figs.

And He's standing on the mount of Olives, because He's about to do a work that would unite Jew and Gentile together in the Abrahamic covenant. For Abraham was the stock of Yahweh's cultivated olive tree, into which we have been grafted. And He sends forth, how many disciples? Two of His disciples; why two? Well, two is the scriptural number of division; and they were going to bring, from the little village of Bethany, two beasts. So He sends forth two disciples because He was going to divide between two beasts; select one, that He might ride upon it, and reject another! Now look very carefully at the record of verse 2; He said to them, 'go your way into the village over against you' (now remember He's in Bethphage when He says this, so the village over against you is Bethany. Bethphage is the house of Israel, Bethany is the house of the Gentiles, in fact, those of you who look up Grim Fair, will find that he gives the meaning not as the house of date palms or Bethany, but rather as the 'house of depression and misery'. An interesting sideline! because the house of the Gentiles, as we saw in the case of the son of Timaeus, the son of the polluted, is a house of depression and misery, and depending on which one you take the meaning is basically the same.) 'Go to Bethany and there you'll find, He said in verse 2, as soon (or as immediately, same word in the Greek back in verse 52 of chapter 10, immediately he received his sight, same word in verse 2) 'immediately you'll find when you enter into it, a colt tied' (as you go forth from the house of Israel, He says to His two disciples, you're going to find an immediate response; you will find Gentiles, because you see, the colt, the foal of an ass was an unbroken animal, no man had ever ridden it, because it then says in verse two, 'whereon never man sat'.) So here we have an unbroken colt, an ass that is not yet trained to bear a burden; it will not receive a man. that was a symbol of the Gentiles as well. No man could tame them; remember Legion? He could not be bound by Jewish Law; no man could ride him and steer him by Law. The Gentiles were unbroken, and yet it does say, doesn't it, have a look at it with your own eyes, it says you'll find a colt tied. And although unbroken by the things of the truth, that they might be steered in Yahweh's way, the Gentiles are nevertheless bound by seed. They are tied.

And what does He say unto His disciples? 'Loose him and bring him'. Bring him where? Back to Bethphage, remember? Go from Bethphage to Bethany, you'll find the colt of the Gentiles tied; no man's ridden him yet, but I'm about to do so; and bring him back to Me in the house of unripe figs. And the Lord Jesus Christ was setting forth a parable; the time would come when there'd be introduced into the house of Israel, the family of the Gentiles. And His work about to be performed in four days time, was to be a work that was to bring all men together, and 'I if I'm lifted up will draw all men unto Me', and He understood that more perfectly than you or I ever will, and hence, He sets about His task with great deliberateness.

Let's have a look at verse 3. 'If any man say unto you, Why do ye this? (as He knew that the Jews would challenge the work of the apostles; would be to stir at the prospect of the Gentiles entering into the covenants of promise.) 'If any man says, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither'. Paul tells us that because the Jews rejected their own Messiah, and turned away from the very covenants that were the basis of their whole life, Yahweh turned to the Gentiles. And He had need of them for a time, and when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then He will bring the olive trees together and Zechariah 4 will be fulfilled in the earth, and both Jew and Gentile will pour oil into the lamp that will give light for the age of the ages and beyond.

In verse 4 we meet the next stage of this marvellous enacted parable. Well, the disciples went their way from Bethphage, the house of Israel, and they found the unbroken colt of the Gentiles bound by the door without'. Now, isn't this marvellous! because you see the Gentiles were bound, but they were outside a house. They were outside a house, and where did they find him? they found him in a place where two ways met, and they were on the mount of Olives, where there were two kinds of olive trees that will one day, be made one. Do you grasp that? They found the colt of the Gentiles outside the house, in a place where two ways met, Jew and Gentile, brought together in one man. 'And they loosed him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye loosing the colt? (there was the anticipation of the Jewish challenge to Gentile salvation! What are you doing? Unloosing a Gentile colt.) 'And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded; and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and He sat upon him'.

Now the record of Matthew in verses 4 to 7 of chapter 21, which is the companion account of Mark 11, tells us that they in fact, brought not just the colt but they brought the ass as well. As I said, that's why He sent forth two disciples, one would lead the ass of Israel and the other would lead the colt which represents the Gentiles. And they brought the ass and the colt to Jesus, and He bypassed the ass of Israel, the burden-bearer of Yahweh, and He chose to ride upon the unbroken colt of the Gentiles. Marvellous wasn't it? I'm sure the disciples couldn't see it at that time at least, but you and I can! And we read in verse 7, 'And they brought the colt to Jesus and they cast their garments on him, and He sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way' (they cast away their own covering because He was about to provide them with a new one on the 14th of Abib). 'And others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed them in the way'. What sort of branches were they?

Now, here's our second departure from Mark chapter 11; mark the chapter and look at John chapter 12. What kind of branches did they strew in the way? John 12:12 we read, it is the very brief but a companion account of Mark 11, 'And on the next day, much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna; Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of Yahweh'(a quotation from Psalm 118). They took branches of palm trees, (and while we're out of Mark 11, have a look at Revelation chapter 7). Here we have the great vision of the redeemed of Yahweh, rejoicing greatly because of the work of the Lamb. In Revelation 7 and verse 9, we have John's vision of the multitude of the redeemed, what does he see? 'After this, the sealing of the redeemed in the previous verses, 'I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues' (there they were from all the nations) 'and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes (that were now whiter than snow, because flesh was gone! all corruption for them was past; they were now bearing immortality ) 'and they had palms in their

hands'(doesn't mean they had a palm in their hand; have a palm in my hand right now; it means they had palm trees in their hands). Why? Because they were from all nations, languages, peoples, and tongues. Isn't it remarkable that in Mark chapter 11 it says they 'cut down the branches and stewed them in the way of the One who was coming' (saving Himself that He might save others) and that He might speak 'peace' to the nations (Zechariah 9:9-10). 'And they cast the palm trees in the way'.

And so in verse 9 of Mark 11, have a look at it very carefully. For the first two lines of verse 9 of that chapter are very important, because what we've got is a quotation in the latter portion of verse 9 from Psalm 118 verse 26, and I mentioned this psalm in a previous session, perhaps the first. It's obviously a psalm of Gentile salvation; I haven't quite fathomed the depths of it, and would appreciate any help to that end; as far as I can see, two references to the circumcising of the Gentiles in that chapter, and it appears to be in the context of judgment. But it is powerfully obvious, that Psalm 118, as far as Christ was concerned, was a psalm that included the Gentiles in the purpose of God. I'll show you why in a minute! It was always upon His mind, and it was upon the minds of those who saw the events of this day. So we have in verse 9 this statement 'but they that went before and they that followed cried saying, (Save now = Hosanna); Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Yahweh', a direct quotation from Psalm 118:26. If you read the first two lines of that verse carefully, 'and they that went before (the Jews) and they that followed (the Gentiles) would all cry out, Save now; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Yahweh'.

How do we know that that is right, ? You'll remember Matthew 23, 'Behold your house is left unto you desolate, and ye shall not see Me until ye shall say, blessed is He that cometh in the name of Yahweh'. Remember that? And when the Jews say that, they will be accompanied by those that followed after, the Gentiles. It was always upon the Lord's mind, was that passage of Psalm 118, 'they that went before (Jews) and they that followed after (Gentiles) cried, Save now', and they go on to say in verse 10, 'Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, (who understood that he had to make a tabernacle for the God of Jacob to include the Gentiles in the purpose of God) 'Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of Yahweh: Save now in the highest', Save now in the (heavens) we might say because it was the work of Yahweh that would bring that salvation; and here was One meek and lowly riding upon the foal of an ass, and a colt that had been unbroken, that He might speak peace to the nations, and He was saving Himself but not by His own power, for He was a man who was made strong for Yahweh's purpose from above. And when He died the veil of the temple was rent; His flesh was rent and it was rent from the top to the bottom, to indicate that it was a divine work, it was Yahweh's work, and the flesh was destroyed from above.

'Save now in the highest. 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'. Another extremely important verse, because what He does here is to do what the priests of Israel did when a house was found to be leprous. And the whole Jewish system, the Mosaic order was leprous, not because it of itself had any problems; it was quite capable of leading men to Christ. It was perfectly adapted for that purpose, but it had become leprous, because of the way in which it was being used by the nation of Israel of that day. And their house was leprous and the Lord comes in as the priest and He inspects the house and finds it to be so; the words used say 'He looked round about' and the Greek word 'periblepo' and it means 'to look round about oneself'; He did it Himself. He went around like the priest, looking at every stone as it were, everything that was going on in that temple, (and you'll see just how important this is, in a moment), and He felt it to be leprous so He went out, at the eventide. As the sun went down upon the Mosaic system and it was about to be folded up like a garment; He left it, and where did He go?

And the record says at the end of verse 11, 'that He went out unto Bethany with the twelve'. He went out to the house of the Gentiles, Bethany; isn't that remarkable? He could have gone back to Bethphage, couldn't He? but He didn't! He went out unto Bethany, when the eventide was come, or as the literal Greek has it, 'it was late already that hour', and the last days of the Mosaic system had dawned, and yet it was forty years before He came as the priest to inspect that house again; but this time He was a King-priest, at the head of the Roman armies, and this time He ordered the house to be

dismantled, and so in chapter 13 of Mark and verse 2 we read, as the disciples look upon that house and gloried in its buildings, He said, 'Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down', and like a leprous house it will be dismantled and destroyed, when I come to inspect it for the second time. And yet this was the 10th of Abib! and that was the day when Israelites took the Passover Lamb, that it might be inspected, to see whether or not it was an acceptable sacrifice to Yahweh, to bring redemption to their house. So while He inspected the Mosaic order and found it to be wanting, they were inspecting Him and they found Him to be a perfect Passover Lamb.

And as He comes the next day from Bethany on the 11th of Abib, in verse 12 of Mark 11 we read, 'That on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, He was hungry'. He was hungry to see righteousness in the nation, 'and seeing a fig tree (Israel, Joel 1:7 and 12, Hosea 9:9-10, Luke 21:29 all tell us, that the fig tree is a symbol of Israel; we don't have to argue about that) 'And seeing the nation of Israel afar off having leaves, He came, if haply (if perhaps it should read) He might find any thing thereon'; (was there going to be some fruits fit for repentance in that nation?) And He didn't find any, and yet there should have been fruit, because the fig tree is barren and leafless in winter, but then, when the rains come, there appears upon the nuded branches of the fig tree, a tiny little bud, and that little bud is the first sign of fruitfulness. It is in fact, the fig in its primary state and then follows the leaves; that little bud doesn't grow much bigger than that; it can be eaten-not very delectable. It is an unripe fig, remember, Bethphage, the house of unripe figs; the Lord didn't expect to come to Israel and find complete fruitfulness. He knew He wouldn't, but He did come expecting to find at least some evidence of fruitfulness behind the leaves! And it was a fact of God's creation, that if you saw leaves on a fig tree, you could expect to find, at least, a very tiny fruit! And when He came to that tree He found nothing but leaves! There was no fruit there, fit for repentance; and He cursed the fig tree because of it. A fig tree with leaves and without fruit was a total contradiction, and here was the nation who had a complete order of things. With all the rituals and ceremonies, with all the washings and all the prayers and phylacteries that were part and parcel of their system, which signified to the nations that they had the things of God; they had a covering, so to speak but they had no fruit! None at all, and no evidence that they would ever produce any. And just like Adam and Eve in the garden, who had an evil conscience, there was a semblance of religion about them after their sin, because they made for themselves a covering of fig leaves, but there was no fruit to be seen anywhere.

That was the state of the nation, so verse 13 concludes, 'And when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; (just like the angels in the garden, nothing but leaves) for the time of figs was not yet (that is, the time of harvest which came in late May, early June was not yet) but there ought to have been, those first unripe figs behind the leaves. And they weren't there; so the Lord says in verse 14, 'No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever', and let's understand that when He uses the term 'forever' in the Greek it is 'aion' and the article is there and it should literally read no man or no one eat fruit of thee for the age, and He refers to the Gentile age. We all know the parable of Luke 21 verses 29 to 30, 'that the fig tree was cut down because it was barren, would again spring forth in the earth, and it would produce leaves', and when you see those trees have leaves then you know that summer or the time of harvest is nigh at hand; and today Israel still has leaves. The fig tree is revived and there are leaves there, but no fruit. 'Let no man eat fruit of thee for the age', and the time is about to come, when fruit will be brought forth upon the branches of the fig tree of Israel.

And His disciples heard Him and didn't understand as we shall (tape turned) an extremely important transaction in this enacted parable. For we read in that 15th verse that 'they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple (to inspect it again) and He began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves', and so He unset the order of the offerings. In those days, the Jews that were suppose to bring their own beasts and birds to the temple, had got so lazy and so careless about the full things, that they simply came to the temple without the encumbrance of bringing a beast with them, and they bought one in the court of the ? yes! in the court of the Gentiles, and they'd set up their tables to change money and sell offerings in all the hypocrisy of that, they were selling them in the court of the

Gentiles, and it was from that court, that the Lord evicted the last vestiges of the Mosaic order.

And the next verse says, verse 16, 'But He would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple', now for centuries the priests and the Levites had carried vessels through the temple, and bustling through that large house, there were always the feet of priests going here and going there, and washing their hands and doing this, and pouring out water; the Mosaic order went on day and night, so to speak. It had been going on like that for centuries, and the Lord comes in and He wouldn't let anybody carry anything through the temple. STOP THAT! You stop it! Put it down! He brings the Mosaic order to a grinding halt on that day. And what does He say? 'And He taught saying, verse 17, 'is it not written, My house shall be called (as the margin has it) a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of thieves'. There are two quotations combined there, the first part of the verse up to the question mark is from Isaiah 56:7 and the last phrase is from Jeremiah 7:11. You put something in Mark 11 and come back to Isaiah 56.

Why did the Lord quote that passage? In Isaiah 56 we read in verse 1, 'Thus saith Yahweh, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.' The basis for salvation would be God manifestation. If you manifest Me, I will give you salvation. I care not whether you be Jew or Gentile, because He then says in verse 3, 'neither let the son of the stranger (this is the context) that hath joined himself to Yahweh, speak saying, Yahweh hath utterly separated me from His people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree' (we've just been talking about dry trees that didn't have any fruit) 'don't let the eunuch say the man who had no one to declare his generation say that. And who was the first eunuch to be introduced to the faith, as far as we are aware? You all know who he was; he was an Ethiopian, who got stuck in Isaiah 53, when he read about one who had no one to declare his generation, and the eunuch could feel some fellow feeling for that man, because he had no one to declare his generation; and no children would flow forth from his loins.) 'Let not the eunuch say, I am a dry tree. Why? Verse 4, 'For thus saith Yahweh unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths (that is, become Israelites indeed, and chose the things that please Me, and take hold of My Abrahamic covenant) 'even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and daughters'(you don't need them to declare your generation) 'I will give you a name better than of sons and of daughters (isn't that remarkable!) 'and I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off'.

Look at verse 6, 'Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to Yahweh, to serve Him, and to love the name of Yahweh, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar' (and here's the quotation the Lord makes; do you know what? He's just picked it up out of the middle of a verse, just a few words from the middle of a verse) 'FOR MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE'. Then, look at the punch line! in verse 8. Here is the conclusion of the whole matter, 'Adonai Yahweh which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather other to Him, beside those that are gathered unto Him', and that refers to you and me! You've made this house a den of thieves, but My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations; and the feet of the strangers and the eunuchs will walk in it, and I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off'.

That's what the Lord was doing, and so back in Mark chapter 11, we can see why it was in verse 18, that the scribes and the chief priests heard it, and they sought how they might destroy Him, for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His doctrine,' and can't we too, be astonished at His marvellous understanding? You know, if that was me going through that, if in three days time I was to be hung upon a tree I can give you an absolute watertight guarantee that my mind would not have been fixed upon your problems; I would be too concerned about my own. BUT NOT THE LORD! He knew what He was doing; He knew why He was doing it; and in the most excruciating hour of His life, He was able to think of the Gentiles in far off days, who would join themselves to

Yahweh.

And in the morning, after having gone out of the city in verse 19, back to Bethany, we believe, in verse 20 we read, 'In the morning as they passed by they saw the fig tree of Israel dried up from the roots' (because there was no Abrahamic faith in them, and Abraham was the root of the tree, from which the branches spread, and because there was no Abrahamic faith, it dried up from the roots and withered away). 'And Peter was astonished and said calling to remembrance the words of the Lord, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.' And the Lord gave to him in four words the constitution of a new order where there would be Abrahamic faith. Look at the words of verse 22, this is all that Jesus said to him, 'HAVE FAITH IN GOD'. And there was the constitution of a new order of things, have faith in God.

But it doesn't end there; the enacted parable of Mark 11, is brought to a dramatic climax in the words that follow. You know, the mind of the Lord was able to run through the scriptures that He might select what He needed for the time. Look what He does in the context of prayer, for in verse 23 He says, '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'. And He concludes then by saying in that particular stanza, 'Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them'. What's He talking about, ? Well, He's talking about a general principle; that if we pray for something that's in accordance with the Father's will, we will get it. No question about that! It's only a matter of time, when God is ready, He will give it! But He's not just talking in a general sense in this passage about prayer, He's talking about the prayers of the saints, who are waiting for the day when the King will speak 'peace' to the nations, when He will come riding upon Yahweh's chariot, when He'll come to bring the two olive trees together that they might pour their oil into the kingdom age and bring light to the Gentiles, in the way it's not given today. When every single one of them will be enlightened in the things of the truth, and they will come to walk in the house of Yahweh's glory; a house of prayer for all nations. He's talking in that context! How do we know that? Well, have a look at the words of verse 23 again, 'For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain'(what mountain is He standing on? The mount of Olives, isn't it? His feet are standing on the mount of Olives, and whosoever, Jew or Gentile who prays earnestly to Yahweh that that mount, the mount of Olives might be removed and be cast into the sea will get what he desires). And the days are shortly going to come when the feet of Christ will stand again upon the mount of Olives, and your feet and mine, will be there with Him, and that mount will cleave in the midst thereof, half toward the north and half toward the south and there will be a very great valley which will run eastwards towards the Dead Sea, which will be filled up with what? It will be filled up with that mountain. And the mountain that He's talking about will be cast into a sea, into the Dead Sea. And your eyes and mine eyes will see it and we will have what we have desired for so long.

You come back with my to Zechariah 14; now you think I might be quoting this out of context, I'm sure; I'll show you I'm not! We all know those words which I've just quoted from verse 4 of Zechariah 14, we use it in our lectures quite frequently, 'And His feet' (whose feet? Yahweh's feet for we know it from verse 3, 'Then shall Yahweh go forth and fight against those nations, but not Yahweh Himself personally, His manifestation, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is spoken of in verse 9 as being King over the earth). And so the Lord will come as Yahweh, HE WHO WILL BECOME manifested in a multitude of mighty ones, end of verse 5; 'Yahweh my God shall come, and all the saints with thee'(we shall be there) and that mountain, the mount of Olives will cleave as I said, and will be cast into the sea. You can read verses 8 to 10 again, in your own time, and you'll see that that's exactly what is going to happen. In what context is this in? Have a look at verse 16.

'And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles'. In the feast of Tabernacles over the course of seven days, to celebrate the ingathering of the harvest, Israel offered 70 bullocks to signify the involvement of the Gentiles in the purpose of

God, and the final ingathering of all nations, in the covenants of Abraham. 70 bullocks over 7 days; it could have said in verse 16, 'they came to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts and to keep the feast of Passover or the feast of Weeks, or the day of Atonement; it doesn't say that it says they will come to keep the feast of Tabernacles, because that was the feast that pointed forward to the involvement of the Gentiles.

'And it shall come to pass, in verse 17, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth will be cursed', where have we read that before? Well, we need in our minds to go back, do we not? to the words of James in Acts 15; let's go back there very briefly, Acts 15, to remind ourselves of where we began. 'Simeon hath declared, verse 14, 'how God at the first did visit (with whom?) the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, (Amos 9 a vision of the kingdom, of a time when that mountain, the mount of Olives, will split in two, and the oppressor will be destroyed; that's Amos 9. Read it when you go home!) And the Lord Jesus Christ will come to destroy the oppression of that land, and He will redeem the people of that land, and I will restore the remnant of Israel says the prophet Amos, and Yahweh sets forth His intention to redeem Israel. It is in that context that we read the words that James quotes in verse 16, 'After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the runs thereof, and I will set it up. That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith Yahweh, who doeth all these things'. that will be fulfilled in the kingdom age, when Zechariah 14 comes to pass, but we know from our studies on Saturday night, that it's going on now, and that James intended that passage to be related to his own times, and the involvement in the Abrahamic promises. How then can we miss the point of verse 18. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world'.

It was Paul who said that the scripture which we have been glorifying this weekend, 'the scripture which will justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel onto Abraham saying, 'In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed'. Let us go from this weekend, praying more earnestly than we've ever done before, praying with all our heart, that the day might be near, when the desire of our heart will be accomplished; let us pray that that mountain, the mount of Olives, might be soon plucked up and cast into the sea, and that we might see the Gentiles keeping the feast of Tabernacles, and ourselves, with palms in our hands!