**Survey of New Testament**

**Mark 11**

**The Triumph (11:1–11)**

1. This description of our Lord’s “Triumphal Entry” may have surprised Mark’s Roman readers, who were accustomed to the glory of the “Roman Triumph.” This was the official welcoming parade given to a victorious Roman general whose armies killed at least 5,000 enemy soldiers, gained new territory for Rome, and brought home rich trophies and important prisoners. The general rode in a golden chariot, surrounded by his officers; and in the parade, he displayed his treasures and prisoners. The Roman priests would be there, offering incense to their gods.
2. Our Lord’s ride into Jerusalem involved a donkey, some garments and branches thrown on the ground, and the praises of some Passover pilgrims. It was the only time Jesus permitted a public demonstration on His behalf.
3. Mark does not quote Zech. 9:9, but he does quote Ps. 118:25–26, a messianic psalm.

**The Tree (11:12–14, 20–26)**

1. At first sight, this is a puzzling miracle. Passover was not the season for figs, yet the Son of God had hoped to find fruit on the tree. When He did not find any, He used His divine power to destroy the tree instead of helping it to become fruitful. Actually, the whole episode was a sermon in action. The tree represents the nation of Israel (Hos. 9:10, 16; Nahum 3:12), which was producing no fruit to the glory of God. Its spiritual roots were dead (v. 20; Matt. 3:10), and it could not produce fruit.
2. Jesus also used the miracle to teach His disciples some practical lessons about faith and prayer. Mountains represent great difficulties that must be removed (Zech. 4:7), and it is our faith in God that enables us to overcome.

**The Temple (11:11, 15–19)**

1. Jesus investigated the temple and then returned the next day to cleanse it. He had cleansed the temple early in His ministry (John 2:13–22), but the religious merchants came back again. In His indictment against the leaders (v. 17), Jesus quoted Isaiah (56:7) and Jeremiah (7:11), both of whom had condemned the nation for its sins in the temple (Isa. 1; Jer. 7).

**The Test (11:27–33)**

1. The religious leaders were angry at what Jesus did and were determined to destroy Him (v. 18); but first, they had to get enough evidence to bring charges against Him. It was all a question of authority (vv. 28–29, 33): What right did He have to cleanse the temple and call it His house? He was claiming to be God!
2. Jesus took them back three years, when John the Baptist was ministering to the people. “Where did John get the authority for his baptism?” Jesus asked. “Was it from God or from men?” (v. 30) This put the scribes, elders, and chief priests in a dilemma; no matter how they answered, they were in trouble! They had not submitted to John’s ministry (Luke 7:29–30); therefore, they were not ready to receive Jesus and trust Him.

**Mark 12**

**Selfishness (12:1–12)**

1. Jesus knew that His enemies wanted to kill Him; and in this parable, He revealed their sinful desire to destroy Him and claim the inheritance for themselves (John 11:45–53). The image of the vineyard immediately identifies the nation of Israel (Isa. 5:1–7; Ps. 80:8–16; Jer. 2:21), and the tenants are the leaders of the nation (v. 10; Acts 4:11).
2. Jesus quoted from Ps. 118, a messianic psalm (118:22–23). He allowed His hearers to pronounce their own sentence (Matt. 21:41). By applying to Himself the image of the cornerstone, Jesus was affirming that He was indeed the Messiah (Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7). This was blasphemy to the religious leaders, and they would have arrested Him then and there were it not for their fear of the people.

**Hypocrisy (12:13–17)**

1. The Pharisees opposed Rome while the Herodians (a political party) cooperated with Rome. The only thing that brought them together was their common enemy, Jesus Christ (see Luke 23:12).
2. The Gk. word for “catch” in v. 13 conveys an image of a trap for hunting game. The committee from the Pharisees and the Herodians thought they could trap Jesus with a question.

**Ignorance (12:18–27)**

1. This is the only place where Mark mentions the Sadducees in his Gospel. They did not believe in the resurrection of the body or in the existence of angels (Acts 23:8). Based on Deut. 25:7–10, their question was hypothetical, devised only for the purpose of trying to catch Jesus in His speech. Instead of revealing His ignorance, it revealed their ignorance of God’s Word.
2. To Jesus, the answer to every question was in the Scriptures and not in man’s own thinking (Isa. 8:20; see Mark 10:19; 12:10).

**Shallowness (12:28–40)**

1. The Pharisees tried one more question, one that the rabbis had been debating for a long time. Of the 613 commandments found in the Law (365 negative, 248 positive), which one is the most important? Jesus replied with the traditional Jewish “statement of faith” found in Deut. 6:4. It was recited morning and evening by some Jews. He then added Lev. 19:18; for if we love God, we will show it by loving our neighbor (Luke 10:25–37).
2. Jesus asked the final—and most important—question, and it put them to silence (Matt. 22:46; Rom. 3:19). When He rode into the city, Jesus had been called “Son of David” (Matt. 21:9) by the crowds. This was, of course, a messianic title, which explains why the Pharisees wanted to silence the people (Luke 19:39–40). Quoting from Ps. 110, Jesus asked them to explain how David’s Lord could also be David’s son; and they would not answer. The answer is that David’s Lord had to become man, but the “theologians” refused to face the implications of both the question and the answer. Their knowledge of the Word was shallow and their submission to it was very insincere.
3. Jesus closed this “debate” with a warning (vv. 38–40) and an example (vv. 41–44), both of which exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. When you contrast the conduct of the widow and that of the scribes, you see what God values most.

**Mark 13**

The believers who first read Mark’s Gospel were being persecuted and were tempted to give up and compromise their witness. This version of the Olivet Discourse was just the encouragement they needed to remain faithful to the Lord. The sermon focuses on the last days and describes the first part (13:5–13), the middle (13:14–18), and the last part of the tribulation, leading up to the Lord’s return to the earth (13:19–27). But the sermon also gives us principles that apply to suffering saints in every age. Jesus issued four warnings for His people to heed in times of persecution and opposition.

**Don’t Be Deceived (13:1–8)**

1. The beautiful temple would be destroyed (v. 2). Four of the disciples asked when it would be destroyed and what sign would announce this disastrous event. They thought that the destruction of the temple, the end of the age, and the coming of the kingdom would occur at the same time; so Jesus explained to them the general course of the last days.
2. His greatest concern was that His people not be deceived by the false Christs that would appear and promise to lead them to victory and glory. He also pointed out the “false signs” that could lead them astray (vv. 7–8).

**Don’t Be Afraid (13:9–13)**

1. Times of persecution are times for proclamation, and we must not be afraid to declare the Gospel and acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. The Holy Spirit helps those who walk with the Lord and sincerely want to glorify Him. This is seen many times in the Book of Acts.
2. Verse 10 in spite of all that Satan does during the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” God’s Word shall be proclaimed and His will accomplished!
3. The promise in v. 13 is a condition, we must continue, in faith, to the end. There is never a time when we can relax in our faith in Christ. In every age of the church, true faith is always proved by faithfulness to the end.

**Don’t Be Ignorant (13:14–27)**

1. The emphasis here is on knowing what the Scriptures teach (vv. 14, 23). The “abomination of desolation” refers to the image that the Antichrist (“the Beast” of Rev. 13) will put into the Jewish temple (Dan. 9:27; 2 Thes. 2:3–10) and force the godless world to worship. This will happen in the middle of the seven-year tribulation period and will be a special warning to the Jews in Judea that it is time to get out! This warning has nothing to do with the return of Christ for His church (1 Thes. 4:13–18), for we have no idea when that event will take place.
2. Verses 24–27 describe the end of the Tribulation and the coming of Christ to the earth to defeat His enemies and establish His kingdom (Rev. 19:11–20:5). The scattered Jewish nation will be regathered (Deut. 30:3–6; Isa. 43:6) and the nation restored.

**Don’t Be Careless (13:28–37)**

1. The emphasis is on knowing (vv. 28–29) and watching (vv. 33–35, 37). The Parable of the Fig Tree stresses what we know (His coming is near), and the Parable of the Servants stresses what we do not know (when He will come). “Coming events cast their shadows before”; so when we see some of the “tribulation signs” beginning in our day, we know that the time is short (Luke 21:28). But the important thing is not watching the calendar but building our character and the church. We must be alert (“watch”) and be found doing His work when He comes. See 1 Thes. 5:1–11.
2. “This generation” in v. 30 probably refers to the generation of people living when all these things take place. Note how Jesus used the word “generation” in 8:12, 38 and 9:19. In spite of man’s wickedness and Satan’s work, the nation of Israel will not be destroyed.

**Mark 14**

The chief priests and scribes had already determined to kill Jesus, but they wanted to do it after the Passover. Since Jesus was a popular person, and Jerusalem was filled with excited Jews, it seemed wisest to wait until after the Passover; but God had other plans. Judas would make it possible for the leaders to arrest Him during the feast (vv. 10–11; Matt. 26:14–16). The Lamb of God must die on the Passover. In this chapter, Mark presents Jesus in four different roles.

**Jesus, the Honored Guest (14:1–11)**

1. We do not know who Simon the leper was. Perhaps he was someone in Bethany whom Jesus had healed of leprosy and whose home was opened to the Master, as was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.
2. Mary’s act of love was accepted by Jesus, criticized by Judas and the other disciples (John 12:4–6), and reported to the church throughout the world (v. 9). During Passover, the Jews did especially try to help the poor, and Jesus did not oppose this good custom. The ointment cost a year’s wages for the average worker, so if it had been sold, the money would have fed a lot of poor people. But Mary wanted to anoint Jesus in preparation for His death and burial, and that was more important than feeding the poor. It was Judas who was the “waster,” not Mary! He wasted his God-given opportunities and eventually wasted his life, ending it by committing suicide.

**Jesus, the Gracious Host (14:12–26)**

1. Jesus sent Peter and John (Luke 22:8) to prepare the Upper Room for the last Passover. Jesus made two startling revelations that evening.
2. First, He revealed that one of the Twelve was a traitor (vv. 17–21). The form of their question indicates that nobody at the table thought himself guilty: “Surely it is not I!” Jesus protected Judas until the very end and gave him every opportunity to repent. We must not think of Judas as a man fated to fulfill prophecy (Ps. 41:9; 55:12–14), but as a man who sinned away his opportunities.
3. The second revelation was that Peter would betray Him. Jesus first revealed this after Judas left the room (John 13:31–38; Luke 22:31–38), and then repeated it when He and the disciples got to the Garden of Gethsemane (vv. 26–31; Matt. 26:30–35). Of course, Peter denied that such a thing could happen; but it happened just the same.
4. At the close of the Passover meal, Jesus took the bread and wine and gave them new meanings as He instituted Communion. We remember people for their lives, but Jesus wants us to remember Him for His death; the spiritual blessings we have as children of God come through His death.

**Jesus, the Submissive Son (14:27–42)**

1. When they arrived at Gethsemane (meaning “oil press”), Jesus quoted Zech. 13:7. He also gave them a word of encouragement: He would rise from the dead and meet them in Galilee. This was now the fifth mention of His resurrection (8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34), but the disciples simply did not grasp the message.
2. The phrases “sore amazed,” “very heavy,” and “exceedingly sorrowful” reveal the human suffering of our Lord in the Garden (Heb. 5:7–8). He was overwhelmed with anguish as He contemplated taking “the cup”: being made sin on the cross. The presence and prayers of His friends would have meant so much to Him, but they went to sleep!

**Jesus, the Obedient Prisoner (14:43–72)**

1. So hypocritical was Judas that he used kisses, a mark of affection, to betray Jesus. So unprepared spiritually was Peter that he tried to defend Jesus with his sword! Had Peter been awake, he would have heard his Master’s prayers and known that He was ready to die.
2. Jesus was first led to Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas, the official high priest (John 18:13–24). Then Jesus was taken to Caiaphas and the Jewish council where people witnessed against Him, but their witness did not agree. When Jesus made the claim to be the messiah of v. 62, it was more than the high priest could take; and he declared Jesus guilty.
3. Peter went right into the jaws of temptation, and he denied the Lord three times. After this Peter repented (Luke 22:62). If Peter who lived with Jesus could fall into such sin, how much more do we need to take heed, watch, and pray lest we give into temptation. John 21:15–19 assures us that Peter was forgiven and restored to ministry.