



THE BOOK OF MARK

Lesson 18—Mark 11:1–26

Jesus' Final Visit to Jerusalem, Curses the Fig Tree, Cleanses the Temple

PASSOVER IN JERUSALEM

- Luke 2:41
- John 2:13
- John 13:2, 18:28; Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:14; Luke 22:8

- Mark 11:1–26
- Matthew 21:1–22
- Luke 19:28–40
- John 11:55–59
- John 12:12–19

Part 1—Enters Jerusalem (twice)

Part 2—Cleanses the Temple

Part 3—The Fig Tree and Have Faith in God

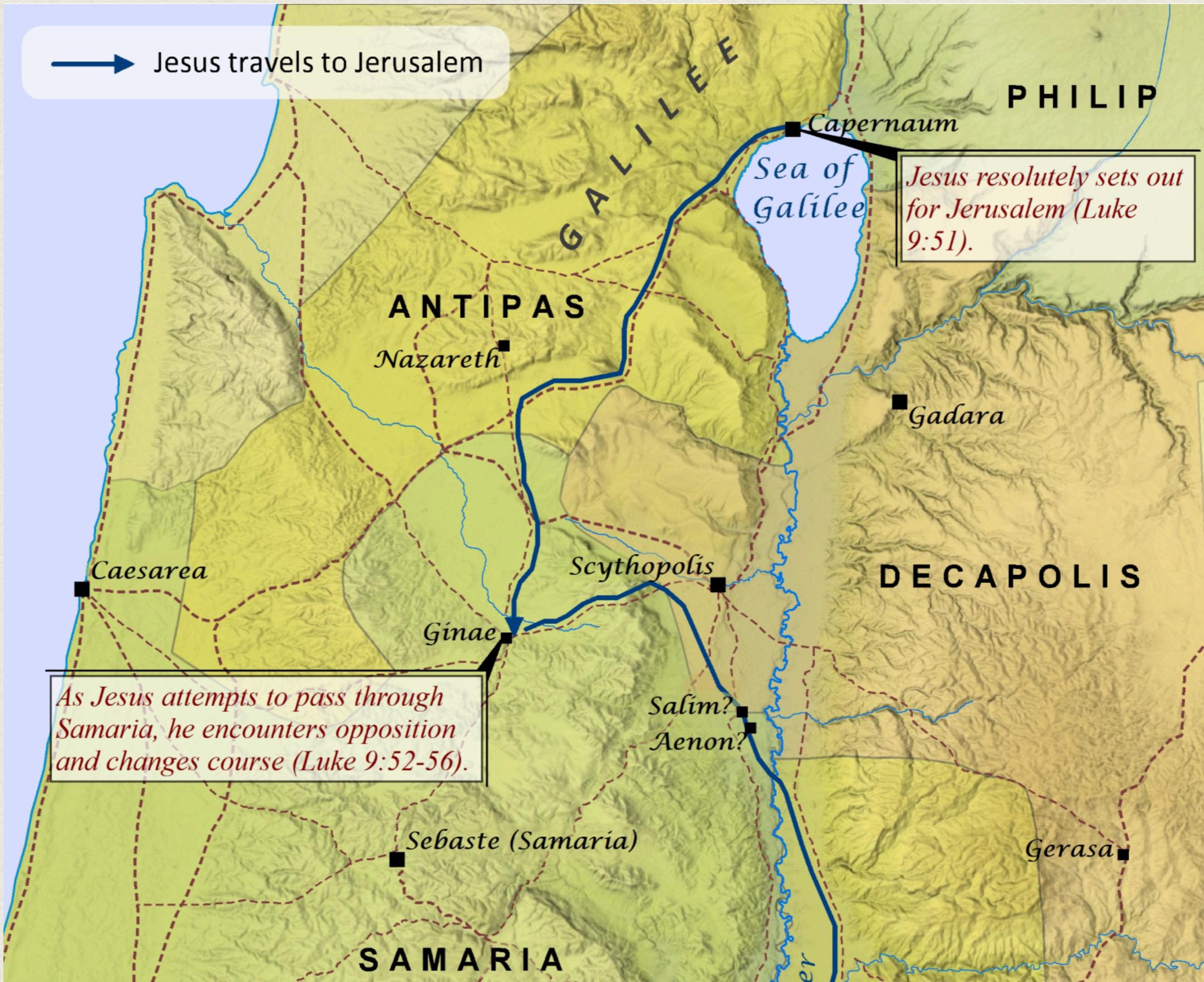
- Jesus' triumphal entry (John 12:12–19; Mark 11:1–10; Matthew 21:1–11; Luke 19:37–40)
- What prophecies were fulfilled? (Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 12:6; Zephaniah 3:14)
- What was the result of entering Jerusalem this way?
- John 11:35; Luke 19:41
- What happened between Mark 11:10 and 11?

Matthew, Mark, and Luke present similar accounts of Jesus' final visit to Jerusalem. In general, they present Jesus as making a single journey to Jerusalem for the Passover, beginning in Capernaum, passing through Perea and Jericho, and ending at Bethany and Bethphage, where he entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

The distance between biblical Capernaum and Jerusalem is approximately 85 miles via the most direct ancient route that avoided Samaria, while a longer route through the Jordan Valley and Jericho would be around 125 miles.

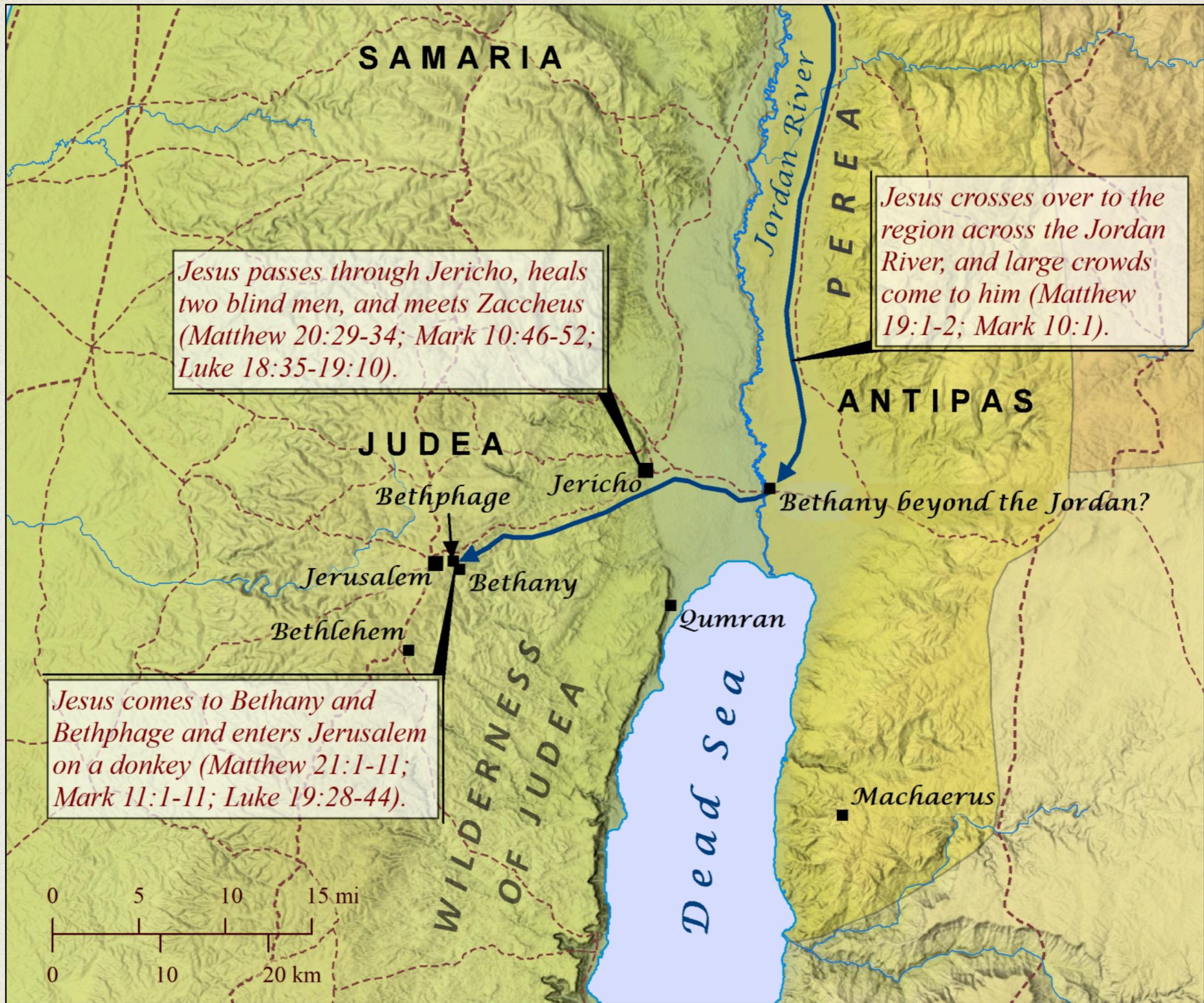


Jesus travels to Jerusalem



Jesus resolutely sets out for Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).

As Jesus attempts to pass through Samaria, he encounters opposition and changes course (Luke 9:52-56).

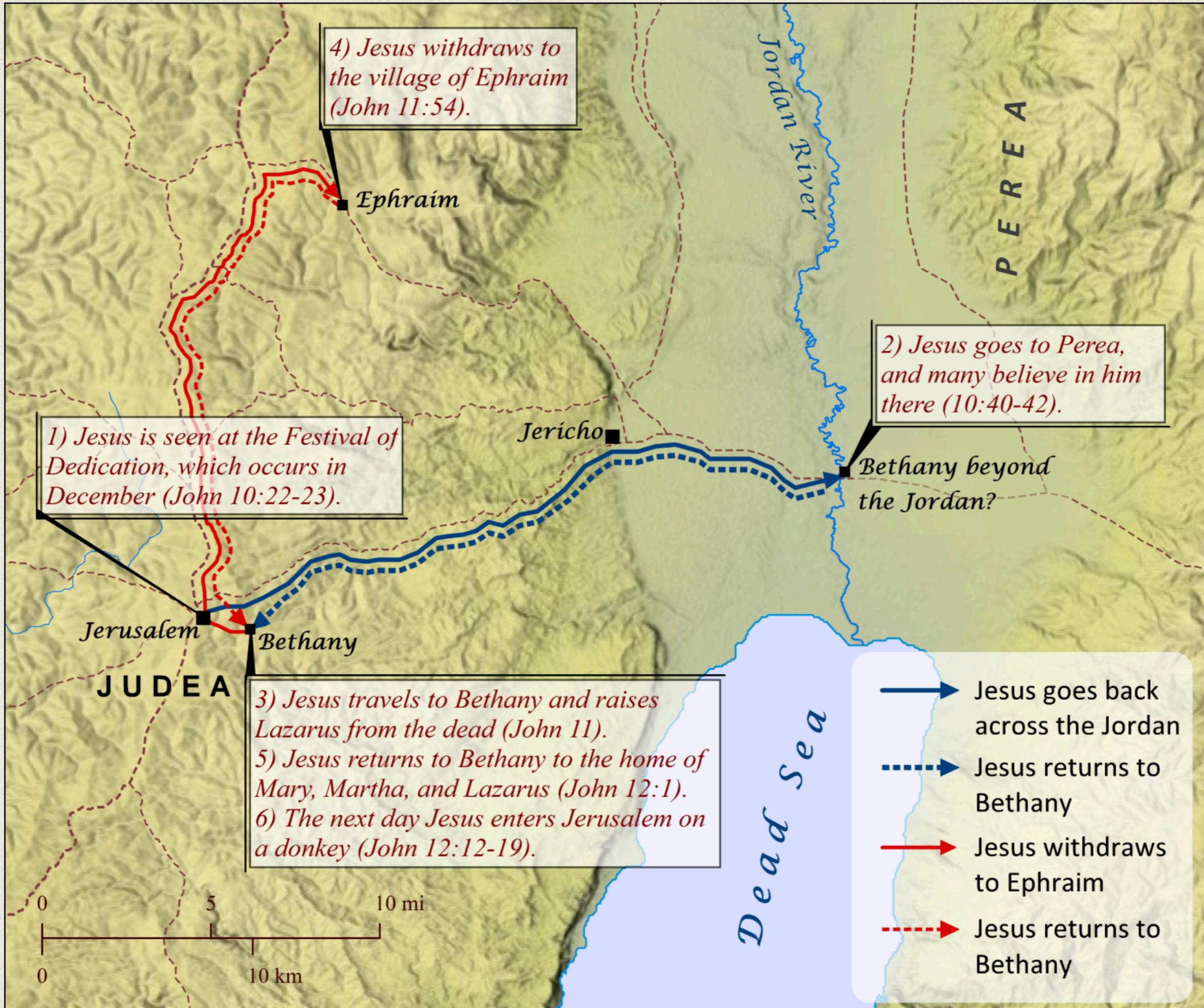


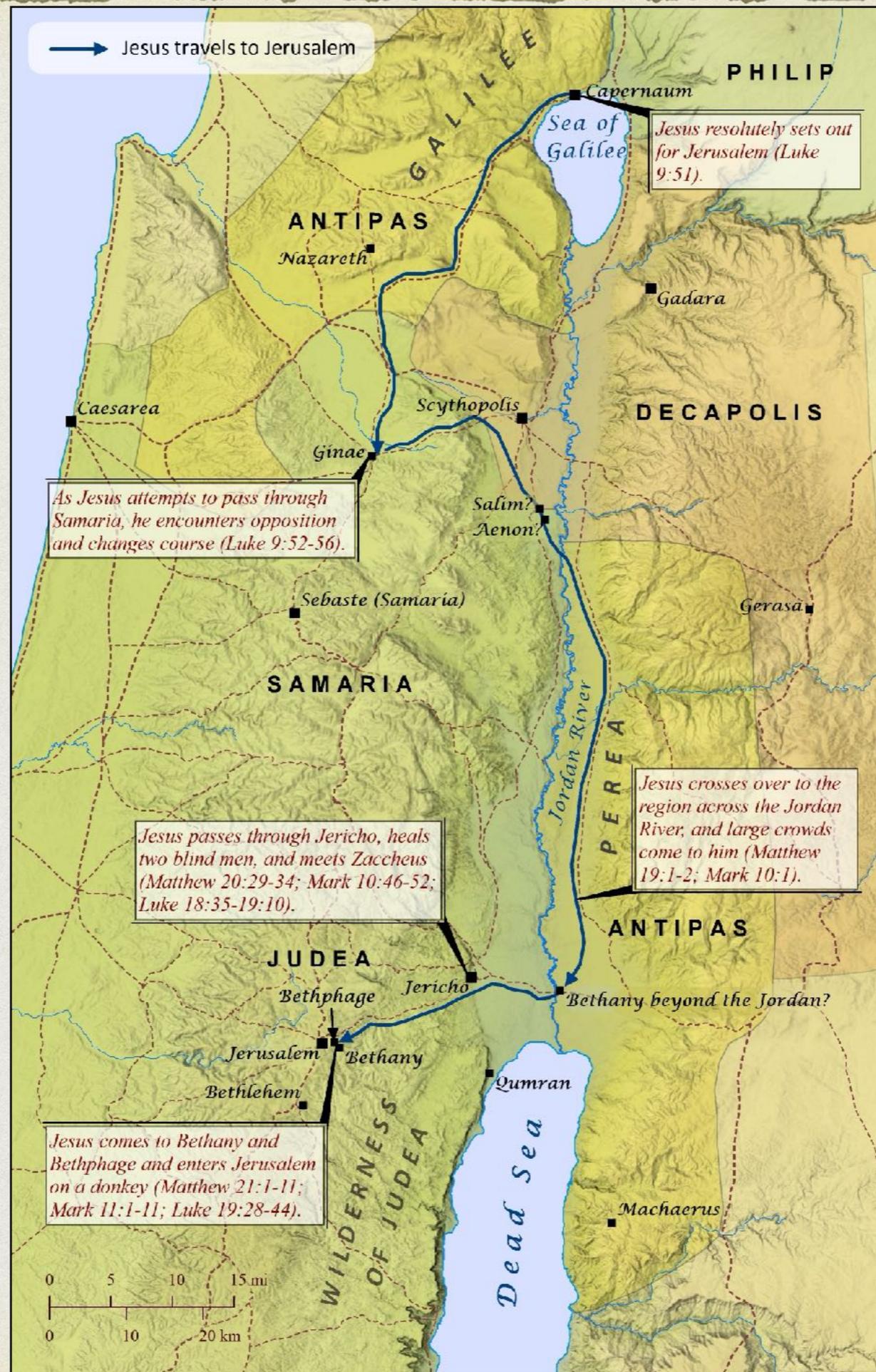
Jesus passes through Jericho, heals two blind men, and meets Zaccheus (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-19:10).

Jesus crosses over to the region across the Jordan River, and large crowds come to him (Matthew 19:1-2; Mark 10:1).

Jesus comes to Bethany and Bethphage and enters Jerusalem on a donkey (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44).







It was on the first day of the week that Christ made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Multitudes who had flocked to see Him at Bethany now accompanied Him, eager to witness His reception. Many people were on their way to the city to keep the Passover, and these joined the multitude attending Jesus. All nature seemed to rejoice. The trees were clothed with verdure, and their blossoms shed a delicate fragrance on the air. A new life and joy animated the people. The hope of the new kingdom was again springing up. (*DA 569.3*)

Christ was following the Jewish custom for **a royal entry**. The animal on which He rode was that ridden by the kings of Israel, and prophecy had foretold that thus the Messiah should come to His kingdom. No sooner was He seated upon the colt than a loud shout of triumph rent the air. The multitude hailed Him as Messiah, their King. Jesus now accepted the homage which He had never before permitted, and the **disciples** received this as proof that their glad hopes were to be realized by seeing Him established on the throne.

The multitude were convinced that the hour of their emancipation was at hand. In imagination they saw the Roman armies driven from Jerusalem, and Israel once more an independent nation. (*DA 570.1*)

All were happy and excited; the people vied with one another in paying Him homage. They could not display outward pomp and splendor, but they gave Him the **worship of happy hearts.** (*DA 570.1*)

They were unable to present Him with costly gifts, but they spread their outer garments as a carpet in His path, and they also strewed the leafy branches of the olive and the palm in the way. They could lead the triumphal procession with no royal standards, but they cut down the spreading palm boughs, Nature's emblem of victory, and waved them aloft with loud acclamations and hosannas. (*DA 570.1*)

As they proceeded, the multitude was continually increased by those who had heard of the coming of Jesus and hastened to join the procession. Spectators were constantly mingling with the throng, and asking, Who is this? What does all this commotion signify? They had all heard of Jesus, and expected Him to go to Jerusalem; but they knew that He had heretofore discouraged all effort to place Him on the throne, and they were greatly astonished to learn that this was He. **They wondered** what could have wrought this change in Him who had declared that His kingdom was not of this world. (*DA 570.2*)

Their questionings are silenced by a shout of triumph. Again and again it is repeated by the eager throng; it is taken up by the people afar off, and echoed from the surrounding hills and valleys. And now the procession is joined by crowds from Jerusalem. From the multitudes gathered to attend the Passover, **thousands** go forth to welcome Jesus. They greet Him with the waving of palm branches and a burst of sacred song. The priests at the temple sound the trumpet for evening service, but there are few to respond, and the rulers say to one another in alarm. “The world is gone after Him.” (*DA* 571.1)

Never before in His earthly life had Jesus permitted such a demonstration. He clearly foresaw the result. It would bring Him to the cross. But **it was His purpose** thus publicly to present Himself as the Redeemer. He desired to call attention to the sacrifice that was to crown His mission to a fallen world. While the people were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, He, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set Himself apart as an oblation. It would be needful for His church in all succeeding ages to make His death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt. **It was necessary**, then, that the eyes of all people should now be directed to Him; the events which preceded His great sacrifice must be such as to call attention to the sacrifice itself. After such a demonstration as that attending His entry into Jerusalem, all eyes would follow His rapid progress to the final scene. (*DA* 571.2)

The events connected with this triumphal ride would be the talk of every tongue, and would bring Jesus before every mind. After His crucifixion, many would recall these events in their connection with His trial and death. They would be led to search the prophecies, and would be convinced that Jesus was the Messiah; and in all lands converts to the faith would be multiplied. (*DA* 571.3)

In this one triumphant scene of His earthly life, the Saviour might have appeared escorted by heavenly angels, and heralded by the trump of God; but such a demonstration would have been contrary to the purpose of His mission, contrary to the law which had governed His life. He remained true to the humble lot He had accepted. The burden of humanity He must bear until His life was given for the life of the world. (*DA 571.4*)

Never before had the world seen such a triumphal procession. It was not like that of the earth's famous conquerors. No train of mourning captives, as trophies of kingly valor, made a feature of that scene. But about the Saviour were the glorious trophies of His labors of love for sinful man. There were the **captives** whom He had rescued from Satan's power, praising God for their deliverance. The **blind** whom He had restored to sight were leading the way. The **dumb** whose tongues He had loosed shouted the loudest hosannas. The **cripples** whom He had healed bounded with joy, and were the most active in breaking the palm branches and waving them before the Saviour. **Widows and orphans** were exalting the name of Jesus for His works of mercy to them. The **lepers** whom He had cleansed spread their untainted garments in His path, and hailed Him as the King of glory. Those whom His voice had **awakened from the sleep of death** were in that throng. **Lazarus**, whose body had seen corruption in the grave, but who now rejoiced in the strength of glorious manhood, led the beast on which the Saviour rode.

(DA 572.2)

Many Pharisees witnessed the scene, and, burning with envy and malice, sought to turn the current of popular feeling. With all their authority they tried to silence the people; but their appeals and threats only increased the enthusiasm. They feared that this multitude, in the strength of their numbers, would make Jesus king. As a last resort they pressed through the crowd to where the Saviour was, and accosted Him with reproving and threatening words: "Master, rebuke Thy disciples." They declared that such **noisy demonstrations were unlawful**, and would not be permitted by the authorities. But they were silenced by the reply of Jesus, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." That **scene of triumph was of God's own appointing**. It had been foretold by the prophet, and man was powerless to turn aside God's purpose. Had men failed to carry out His plan, He would have given a voice to the inanimate stones, and they would have hailed His Son with acclamations of praise. As the silenced Pharisees drew back, the words of Zechariah were taken up by hundreds of voices: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

(DA 572.3)

The triumphal ride of Christ into Jerusalem was the dim foreshadowing of His coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory, amid the triumph of angels and the rejoicing of the saints. Then will be fulfilled the words of Christ to the priests and Pharisees: “Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” **Matthew 23:39**. In prophetic vision Zechariah was shown that day of final triumph; and he beheld also the doom of those who at the first advent had rejected Christ: “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” **Zechariah 12:10**. This scene Christ foresaw when He beheld the city and wept over it. In the temporal ruin of Jerusalem He saw the final destruction of that people who were guilty of the blood of the Son of God. (*DA 580.1*)

The disciples saw the hatred of the Jews to Christ, but they did not yet see to what it would lead. They did not yet understand the true condition of Israel, nor comprehend the retribution that was to fall upon Jerusalem. This Christ opened to them by a **significant object lesson.** (*DA 580.2*)

The last appeal to Jerusalem had been in vain. The priests and rulers had heard the prophetic voice of the past echoed by the multitude, in answer to the question, “Who is this?” but they did not accept it as the voice of Inspiration. In anger and amazement they tried to silence the people. **There were Roman officers in the throng**, and to them His enemies denounced **Jesus as the leader of a rebellion**. They represented that He was about to take possession of the temple, and reign as king in Jerusalem. (*DA* 580.3)

But the calm voice of Jesus hushed for a moment the clamorous throng as He again declared that He had not come to establish a temporal rule; He should soon ascend to His Father, and His accusers would see Him no more until He should come again in glory. Then, too late for their salvation, they would acknowledge Him. These words Jesus spoke with sadness and with singular power. The Roman officers were silenced and subdued. Their hearts, though strangers to divine influence, were moved as they had never been moved before. In the calm, solemn face of Jesus they read love, benevolence, and quiet dignity. They were stirred by a sympathy they could not understand. Instead of arresting Jesus, **they were more inclined to pay Him homage.** Turning upon the priests and rulers, **they charged them with creating the disturbance.** These leaders, chagrined and defeated, turned to the people with their complaints, and disputed angrily among themselves. (*DA* 581.1)

Meanwhile Jesus passed unnoticed to the temple. All was quiet there, for the scene upon Olivet had called away the people. For a short time Jesus remained at the temple, looking upon it with sorrowful eyes. Then He withdrew with His disciples, and returned to Bethany. When the people sought for Him to place Him on the throne, He was not to be found. (*DA* 581.2)

Jesus wept in anguish over the doomed city, but He could not deliver her. He had exhausted every resource. In rejecting the warnings of God's Spirit, Israel had rejected the only means of help. There was no other power by which they could be delivered.

The Jewish nation was a symbol of the people of all ages who scorn the pleadings of Infinite Love. The tears of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem were for the sins of all time. In the judgments pronounced upon Israel, those who reject the reproofs and warnings of God's Holy Spirit, may read their own condemnation. (*DA* 587.2–.3)

Part 3

Mark 11:12–14, 20–26

Matthew 21:18–22

The entire night Jesus spent in prayer, and in the morning He came again to the temple. On the way He passed a fig orchard. He was hungry, “and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find anything thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.” (*DA* 581.3)

It was not the season for ripe figs, except in certain localities; and on the highlands about Jerusalem it might truly be said, “The time of figs was not yet.” But in the orchard to which Jesus came, one tree appeared to be in advance of all the others. It was already covered with leaves. It is the nature of the fig tree that before the leaves open, the growing fruit appears. Therefore this tree in full leaf gave promise of well-developed fruit. But its appearance was deceptive. Upon searching its branches, from the lowest bough to the topmost twig, Jesus found “nothing but leaves.” It was a mass of pretentious foliage, nothing more. (*DA 581.4*)

The cursing of the fig tree was an **acted parable**. That barren tree, flaunting its pretentious foliage in the very face of Christ, was a symbol of the Jewish nation. The Saviour desired to make plain to His disciples the cause and the certainty of Israel's doom. For this purpose He invested the tree with moral qualities, and made it the expositor of divine truth. The Jews stood forth distinct from all other nations, professing allegiance to God. They had been specially favored by Him, and they laid claim to righteousness above every other people. But they were corrupted by the love of the world and the greed of gain. They boasted of their knowledge, but they were ignorant of the requirements of God, and were full of hypocrisy. Like the barren tree, they spread their pretentious branches aloft, luxuriant in appearance, and beautiful to the eye, but they yielded "nothing but leaves." The Jewish religion, with its magnificent temple, its sacred altars, its mitered priests and impressive ceremonies, was indeed fair in outward appearance, but humility, love, and benevolence were lacking. (*DA 582.4*)

All the trees in the fig orchard were destitute of fruit; but the leafless trees raised no expectation, and caused no disappointment. By these trees **the Gentiles were represented**. They were as destitute as were the Jews of godliness; but they had not professed to serve God. They made no boastful pretensions to goodness. They were blind to the works and ways of God. With them the time of figs was not yet. They were still waiting for a day which would bring them light and hope. The Jews, who had received greater blessings from God, were held accountable for their abuse of these gifts. The privileges of which they boasted only increased their guilt. (*DA 583.1*)

Jesus had come to the fig tree hungry, to find food. So He had come to Israel, hungering to find in them the fruits of righteousness. He had lavished on them His gifts, that they might bear fruit for the blessing of the world. Every opportunity and privilege had been granted them, and in return He sought their sympathy and co-operation in His work of grace. He longed to see in them self-sacrifice and compassion, zeal for God, and a deep yearning of soul for the salvation of their fellow men. Had they kept the law of God, they would have done the same unselfish work that Christ did. But love to God and man was eclipsed by pride and self-sufficiency. They brought ruin upon themselves by refusing to minister to others. The treasures of truth which God had committed to them, they did not give to the world. In the barren tree they might read both their sin and its punishment. Withered beneath the Saviour's curse, standing forth sere and blasted, dried up by the roots, the fig tree showed what the Jewish people would be when the grace of God was removed from them. Refusing to impart blessing, they would no longer receive it. "O Israel," the Lord says, "thou hast destroyed thyself." Hosea 13:9. (*DA 583.2*)

There needs to be much more close investigation of the week past. Review it and see if, as a branch of the living Vine, you have drawn nourishment from the parent Vine to bear much fruit to the glory of God. If there has been feverish excitement, if hasty words have been spoken, if passion has been revealed, these have surely been the working on Satan's side of the question. Clear the heart by confession. Sincerely **make everything right before the Sabbath**. Examine your own selves, whether ye be in the faith. **We need to guard our own souls constantly, lest we make a great profession but, like the flourishing fig tree spreading its branches in pretentious foliage, reveal no precious fruit**. Christ is hungering to see and receive fruit. Leaves of profession without fruit are to Christ just as worthless as those of the fig tree which He cursed....(*TMK* 147.3)

Jesus is coming, but not as at His first advent, a babe in Bethlehem; not as He rode into Jerusalem, when the disciples praised God with a loud voice and cried, “Hosanna”; but in the glory of the Father and with all the retinue of holy angels to escort Him on His way to earth. All heaven will be emptied of the angels, while the waiting saints will be looking for Him and gazing into heaven, as were the men of Galilee when He ascended from the Mount of Olivet. Then only those who are holy, those who have followed fully the meek Pattern, will with rapturous joy exclaim as they behold Him, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.” And they will be changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump”—that trump which wakes the sleeping saints, and calls them forth from their dusty beds, clothed with glorious immortality, and shouting, “Victory! Victory over death and the grave!” The changed saints are then caught up together with the angels to meet the Lord in the air, never more to be separated from the object of their love. (*EW* 110.1)

I have frequently seen that the children of the Lord neglect prayer, especially secret prayer, altogether too much; that many do not exercise that faith which it is their privilege and duty to exercise, often waiting for that feeling which faith alone can bring. **Feeling is not faith**; the two are distinct. Faith is ours to exercise, but joyful feeling and the blessing are God's to give. The grace of God comes to the soul through the channel of living faith, and that faith it is in our power to exercise. (*EW* 72.1)

True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing and claim it as ours. We are then to believe that we receive the blessing, because our faith has hold of it, and according to the Word it is ours. “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24. Here is faith, naked faith, to believe that we receive the blessing, even before we realize it. When the promised blessing is realized and enjoyed, faith is swallowed up. (*EW 72.2*)

But many suppose they have much faith when sharing largely of the Holy Spirit and that they cannot have faith unless they feel the power of the Spirit. Such confound faith with the blessing that comes through faith. The very time to exercise faith is when we feel destitute of the Spirit. When thick clouds of darkness seem to hover over the mind, then is the time to let living faith pierce the darkness and scatter the clouds. **True faith rests on the promises contained in the Word of God**, and those only who obey that Word can claim its glorious promises. “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7. “Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” 1 John 3:22. (*EW* 72.2)

There are many who long to help others, but they feel that they have no spiritual strength or light to impart. Let them present their petitions at the throne of grace. Plead for the Holy Spirit. God stands back of every promise He has made. With your Bible in your hands say, I have done as Thou hast said. I present Thy promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (*COL* 147.2)

We must not only pray in Christ's name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit "maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans 8:26. Such prayer God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Ephesians 3:20. (*COL* 147.3)

The rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We have sinned against Him, and are undeserving of His favor; yet He Himself has put into our lips that most wonderful of pleas,

“Do not abhor us, for Thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us.”

[Jeremiah 14:21](#). When we come to him confessing our unworthiness and sin, He has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us. (*COL* 148.1)

Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success must understand. Christ says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal. (*ED 257.7*)

For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received.

We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most. (*ED* 258.1–.2)

How to exercise faith should be made very plain. To every promise of God there are conditions. If we are willing to do His will, all His strength is ours. Whatever gift He promises, is in the promise itself. "The seed is the word of God." Luke 8:11. As surely **as the oak is in the acorn**, so surely is the gift of God in His promise. If we receive the promise, we have the gift. (*ED* 253.3)

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

(Revelation 3:20)

Revelation 3:14–22

Revelation 17:4

Revelation 18:7

Revelation 19:8, 11

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me ... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18. (*COL 311.3*)

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. (*COL* 311.4)

In both the Old and the New Testament, the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people. To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home **His bride to the Father's house**, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. He says, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; ... but thou shalt be called My Delight; ... for the Lord delighteth in thee." "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Isaiah 62:5, 4, margin; Zephaniah 3:17. (*DA* 151.1)

He who came from heaven to be our example spent nearly thirty years of His life in common, mechanical labor; but **during this time He was studying** the word and the works of God, and helping, teaching, all whom His influence could reach. When His **public ministry** began, He went about healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, and preaching the gospel to the poor. This is the work of all His followers.

(Ed 267.4)

“He that is greatest among you,” He said, “let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For ... I am among you as he that serveth.” Luke 22:26, 27. (*Ed 268.1*)

Love and loyalty to Christ are the spring of all true service. In the heart touched by His love, there is begotten a desire to work for Him. Let this desire be encouraged and rightly guided. Whether in the home, the neighborhood, or the school, the presence of the poor, the afflicted, the ignorant, or the unfortunate should be regarded, not as a misfortune, but as affording precious opportunity for **service**. (*Ed 268.2*)

Jesus saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom. He reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good. He sought them in the public streets, in private houses, on the boats, in the synagogue, by the shores of the lake, and at the marriage feast. He met them at their daily vocations, and manifested an interest in their secular affairs. He carried His instruction into the household, bringing families in their own homes under the influence of His divine presence. His strong personal sympathy helped to win hearts. He often repaired to the mountains for solitary prayer, but this was a preparation for His labor among men in active life. From these seasons He came forth to relieve the sick, to instruct the ignorant, and to break the chains from the captives of Satan. (*DA* 151.2)

The example of Christ in linking Himself with the interests of humanity should be followed by all who preach His word, and by all who have received the gospel of His grace. We are not to renounce social communion. We should not seclude ourselves from others. In order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord. Not alone from the pulpit are the hearts of men touched by divine truth. There is another field of labor, humbler, it may be, but fully as promising. It is found in the home of the lowly, and in the mansion of the great; at the hospitable board, and in gatherings for innocent social enjoyment. (*DA 152.2*)

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:25)