

Mark 11:1-11

## Introduction

There used to be a popular TV show called “Undercover Boss”. In this show, a high-ranking executive or owner of a big company would go “undercover” as an employee in their company. They would work various jobs for a week, getting to know what the working conditions were like in the company they worked for and some of the employees who worked underneath them.

At the end of the week, some of the employees they worked with would be invited to the corporate headquarters where the boss would be revealed. Sometimes the boss’ experience working in their own company would be eye-opening. They would realize they weren’t treating their employees well. Other times, bosses would find smart, hardworking employees and give them promotions or raises. And other times, the undercover bosses find that there are horrible people working in their companies who needed to be fired.

In one episode, an executive of The Boston Market restaurant went undercover as a cook at one of their chains. The manager of this particular chain is training her and constantly telling her how much he hates the company and hates customer. Unsurprisingly, this manager is fired immediately when he finds out he was “training” a high ranking executive at the company he works for.

One of the reasons shows like this can be compelling is because they strike a cord with our experiences. If you live long enough and pay attention you will come to know people who are constantly overlooked. They deserve a promotion or recognition but they don’t get it. Likewise, you may come across people who seem to always “get away with it” like the cheat or the bully.

Undercover Bosses offers a small scale glimpse at justice. When the boss is revealed, the deserving are promoted and the wicked are fired.

Small glimpses of justice like this mirror what the Bible shows whenever God shows up. When God shows up, he comes as the just judge. Bringing relief to those in need and bringing judgement upon the wicked.

You may or may not be aware of this, but this is exactly what is happening in the Triumphal Entry. When Jesus rides into Jerusalem, he does so as the Lord God of Israel. He comes to his rightful home, the Temple, in order to pronounce the judgements of the returning king.

With this in mind, I want to ask (and answer) three questions this morning:

1. What does it mean when God shows up in the Bible?
2. What did it mean when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem?
3. What does it mean when Jesus shows up now?

## What Does It Mean When God Shows Up in the Bible?

When God shows up in the Bible his arrival comes with blessings and judgements. This event is referred to as the “Day of the Lord.”

The first “Day of the Lord” in the Bible is recorded in [Genesis 3](#). After Adam and Eve eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, God shows up. And when God showed up it was a day of judgement, a day of the Lord. God came to pronounce his judgements on Adam, Eve, and the Serpent based on what had taken place.

In many ways, the Day of the Lord is terrifying to consider. However, as you read through [Genesis 3](#), there are not only curses, there are also promises. The serpent is cursed, and Adam and Eve fall under the curse, but God also gives the promise of salvation in [Genesis 3:15](#) when he tells the Serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.””

[Genesis 3](#) is not the only “Day of the Lord” event in the Bible. The quintessential “Day of the Lord” in the Bible is the Exodus. In the Exodus God sends Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh. Pharaoh refuses to listen to God’s prophet and so God shows up in Egypt.

And two things very different things happen when God comes to Egypt. On the one hand, the enemies of God and his people are destroyed. On the other hand, God’s people are blessed and delivered. Israel departs Egypt with great riches and Pharaoh and his army are drowned in the Red Sea.

Throughout the Old Testament there is story after story of God showing up in various ways. And whenever God shows up, it means destruction for those who oppose him and blessing for his people who have cried out for his help.

With this established, I'd like to show that this is precisely what is going on when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey 2000 years ago.

## What Did It Mean When Jesus Arrived in Jerusalem?

The Triumphal Entry it was a “Day of the Lord” event.

Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Malachi all spoke of a *future* “Day of the Lord” that would be *greater* than all others; even the Exodus. On *that day*, God himself would come to dwell with his people and realize all the promises that he had made to Abraham and Moses and David.

God would defeat the enemies of God's people like he defeated Pharaoh. God would establish his everlasting kingdom over all the earth like he promised to David. *And* God would bless the gentiles who would come streaming to his light like he promised to Abraham.

When Jesus came riding into Jerusalem, he does so as Israel's God.

The One who called Abraham to leave his father's house. The One who met with Moses on the top of Mount Sinai. The One who promised David an everlasting kingdom. Indeed the One who created the heavens and earth by his word *rode into Jerusalem on a donkey*.

He did so in order to proclaim judgement on his enemies, to bless his people, and to establish his kingdom on earth.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into recalls the words spoke by Isaiah and Zechariah who declared that God would bring salvation to his people. His reward with him and recompense his recompense before him; riding on a donkey.

All of this was proclaimed in the actions of Jesus when he rode into Jerusalem. It was the “Day of the Lord” and God himself had come to his people.

But we all know how the story goes. Instead of Receiving the just judgement, the leaders in Jerusalem would set themselves up against Jesus and crucify the Lord of glory.

The Apostle John writes that the Word “was in the world, and the world was made through him, *yet the world did not know him. He came to his own and his own people did not receive him.*” ([John 1:10-11](#)).

God came to his people as he had promised. He showed up to inspect his kingdom. But the inspection was not a good one. Jesus dooms the Temple to destruction. Instead of a house of prayer for all nations, The temple had become a den of robbers.

But instead of submitting to this judgement and repenting, Jesus’ enemies set themselves up against the Lord’s Anointed.

## What Does It Mean When Jesus Shows Up Now?

Jesus continues to come to his people in the time of the church. It doesn’t look quite the same as it did in the Old Testament or at the Triumphal Entry, but there are still “Days of the Lord”.

Every Lord’s Day, when God’s people gather before him in worship, God shows up. Every Lord’s Day Jesus comes riding into his church in order to inspect his new temple.

And Just as Jesus gave warnings and encouragements and judgements during his earthly ministry he continues to do so through his word and heralds today.

As you hear God’s word read and preached in worship, Jesus is coming into his temple and it is the Day of the Lord.

So what *does* Jesus say when he shows up to his churches. In many ways, Jesus shows up preaching the same message that he preached from the very beginning of Mark’s gospel, “The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the good news.”

The good news that Jesus proclaimed 2000 years ago and the good news that I get to proclaim to you this morning is *terms of peace in the kingdom*.

In all sorts of ways, each and every member of Christ’s church has lifted up their hands in rebellion against their king this past week. If our king delighted in destruction, you would be destroyed. But king Jesus is merciful, slow to anger,

and abounding in steadfast love. Once again, he calls you to repent, to turn from your sins and to turn to him.

The glorious reality of the Triumphal Entry is that when Jesus showed up as God on the “Day of the Lord”, he took the judgement so that we might be forgiven. Because of this, we are welcomed into his kingdom and invited to his tale.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!