

Mark 11:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

Analysis

And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry (τῇ ἐπαύριον ἐξελθόντων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Βηθανίας ἐπείνασεν)—Mark emphasizes Jesus' genuine humanity. The verb epeinasen (ἐπείνασεν, "he was hungry") highlights physical need. Though divine, Jesus experienced true human limitations: hunger, thirst, weariness, suffering. This authenticates the incarnation—the Word became flesh (John 1:14) and experienced full humanity except for sin (Hebrews 4:15).

The timing "on the morrow" (Monday of Passion Week) places this event between the Triumphal Entry and the temple cleansing. Mark's narrative sandwiches the temple cleansing (vv. 15-17) between the fig tree cursing (vv. 12-14) and its withering (vv. 20-21), creating an interpretive framework: the fig tree symbolizes Israel's religious establishment—outwardly flourishing but spiritually barren, facing divine judgment. Jesus' hunger becomes the occasion for a prophetic sign-act revealing God's judgment on fruitless religion.

Historical Context

Jesus and the disciples traveled from Bethany to Jerusalem, a journey of about two miles. They likely left early, before breakfast, explaining Jesus' hunger. The route descended the Mount of Olives' eastern slope, crossed the Kidron Valley, and ascended to Jerusalem and the temple mount. This was Monday of Passion Week; Jesus would be crucified Friday. The intervening days were filled with confrontations with religious leaders (Mark 11:27-12:40), apocalyptic teaching

(Mark 13), and preparation for the Passover meal (Mark 14:12-16). The fig tree incident must be understood symbolically, not as Jesus having a temper tantrum over not finding breakfast. Jesus, who fed 5,000 with loaves and fish, wasn't merely frustrated about missing a meal. Rather, the fig tree becomes a living parable—a prophetic sign-act demonstrating God's judgment on Israel's fruitless religion, particularly the corrupt temple system Jesus would cleanse later that day.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' genuine human experience of hunger authenticate the reality of the incarnation and His ability to sympathize with our weaknesses?
2. What does the timing of this event—between Triumphal Entry and temple cleansing—reveal about Jesus' progressive revelation of judgment?
3. In what ways does Mark's 'sandwich' narrative technique (fig tree cursing around temple cleansing) help readers interpret both events?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ	τῇ	ἐπαύριον	ἐξεληθόντων	αὐτῶν	ἀπὸ	Βηθανίας
And	G3588	on the morrow	were come	when they	from	Bethany
G2532		G1887	G1831	G846	G575	G963

ἐπείνασεν

he was hungry

G3983