

Matthew 21:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

Analysis

Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered—The Greek ἐπείνασεν (epeinasen) emphasizes Jesus's genuine humanity. The eternal Word who fed 5,000 experienced hunger Himself. This wasn't playacting but authentic human limitation, though without sin (Heb 4:15).

His hunger sets up the fig tree incident (v.19), but Matthew records this physical detail to affirm the Incarnation: Jesus knew fatigue (John 4:6), thirst (John 19:28), and hunger. He entered fully into human experience to become our sympathetic High Priest. God the Son subjected Himself to bodily needs to redeem bodies and souls.

Historical Context

The morning journey from Bethany to Jerusalem was roughly two miles uphill. Travelers commonly ate breakfast after arrival rather than before departure. Fig trees near the road were considered public property—anyone could take fruit for immediate consumption (Deut 23:24-25).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's experience of hunger deepen your confidence that He understands your physical struggles?
2. What does Christ's voluntary acceptance of human limitations teach about humble service versus grasping at privilege (Phil 2:6-7)?

Interlinear Text

Πρωΐας	δὲ	ἐπανάγων	εἰς	τὴν	πόλιν	ἐπείνασεν
in the morning	Now	as he returned	into	G3588	the city	he hungered
G4405	G1161	G1877	G1519		G4172	G3983

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 4:2 (Parallel theme): And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

Hebrews 4:15 (Parallel theme): For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.