

The Fig Tree, the Mountain, and Temple

Presented to the Faith Defenders Class

By Rich Jacobs, M.D

Scripture Reading: Mark 11:1-28 (NASB)

1 And as they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, 2 and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 3 "And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here." 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at the door outside in the street; and they untied it. 5 And some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it; and He sat upon it. 8 And many spread their garments in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before, and those who followed after, were crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest! "
11 And He entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking all around, He departed for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late. 12 And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He became hungry. 13 And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 And He answered and said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening. 15 And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves; 16 and He would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple. 17 And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a robbers' den." 18 And the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching. 19 And whenever evening came, they would go out of the city. 20 And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. 21 And being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered." 22 And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God. 23 "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. 24 "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you. 25 "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. 26["But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions."] 27 And they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, and scribes, and elders came to Him, 28 and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"

Summary of Events

1. Jesus makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and being hailed and greeting as the Messiah, He enters the Temple.
2. Upon entering the Temple, He looks around and abruptly leaves to return to Bethany.
3. The next day, when leaving Bethany to return to Jerusalem, He curses the fig tree because it produced no fruit.
4. Jesus re-enters the Temple and proceeds to cleanse it of merchants and moneychangers.
5. Jesus, and His disciples return to Bethany, and they behold the fig tree, now withered to its roots.
6. When Peter points out the fig tree, Jesus tells the parable of the mountain being prayed into the sea by unwavering faith.
7. He then proceeds to remind them to be forgiving of all who have harmed them so that they too may be forgiven.
8. Jesus returns to Jerusalem where His authority is challenged. This begins a sequence of events that leads to His passion, crucifixion, and resurrection.

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Thought Questions:

1. Why does Jesus enter the Temple on the afternoon of His Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday), look around, and just leave? What do you think He saw?
2. Why do you think that Jesus cursed the fig tree?
3. What does Jesus exhortation about praying a mountain into the sea have to do with Peter's exclamation about the withered fig tree?
4. Why would Jesus choose to follow his teaching about praying against the mountain with a teaching on forgiveness?
5. What do you think Jesus did that caused the leaders of Israel to challenge His authority, in the context of these passages?

Study Notes:

1. Jesus taught in parables and preformed miracles. His parables and His miracles were symbolic and often prophetic.
2. The fig tree is often symbolic of religious Israel.
3. A mountain is often symbolic of government.
4. Now re-read the verses about Jesus cursing the fig tree. If this miracle is also symbolic, what do you think Jesus was really cursing? religious Israel
 - a. Knowing this, what do you think the fruit symbolizes? new believers
 - b. What might the tree's roots symbolize? priesthood, sacrificial system
5. Now read *Luke 13:6, 7*. This has another fig tree parable. For how many years did the man come expecting the fig tree to produce fruit? 3 years
 - a. How many years did Jesus serve in public ministry? 3 years
 - b. How many years did Jesus visit the Temple? 3 years
 - c. Who do you think the man symbolizes in this parable? Jesus
 - d. Why was the fig tree ordered cut down? it bore no fruit for the 3 years
 - e. How do you connect the meaning of the fig tree parable in *Mark 11* with the fig tree parable in *Luke 13*. They both foretell the destruction of the priesthood and the Temple sacrificial system by the Romans in 70 A.D.

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6. When Jesus entered the Temple on Palm Sunday, what do you think He saw? (Hint:

Read *Mark 11: 15, 16*) **He saw merchants and moneychangers**

a. How did Jesus react to what He saw? **He was angry**

b. What did Jesus think the Temple should be used for? (Hint: See *Mark 11:17*)

it was to be a house of prayer for the nations

c. Do you think this has anything to do with the fig tree parable? Explain.

Israel was not bearing fruit. Her religious system was selfish and corrupt. She earned condemnation and judgment.

7. Now, turn to *Mark 13: 1-35*. What is the context of this chapter? **end times**

8. Now pay attention to the fig tree parable found in *Mark 13:28-31*.

a. What is the fig tree doing? **just beginning leaf out and grow**

b. In the context of the chapter, what does this signify? **religious Israel is back again with temple worship and the priestly system**

c. What does this portend regarding end-times? **in the generation of the**

Second Coming of Christ and the end times.

9. Now read *Daniel 9:24-27*. What do you think the fig tree parable has to do with these prophetic passages? **Israel must first re-establish her sacrificial system and**

Temple worship if the antichrist is to end it mid-way through the last 7 years.

10. How do you think Israel will overcome such a powerful world government, like that of the Antichrist, in the final days? (Hint: Re-read *Mark 11:22-24* and recall what a mountain symbolizes.) **by prayer and faith in Christ**

11. How will Israel assume her rightful place as servant leader of all nations after she has been so brutalized by the nations of the world? (Hint: See *Mark 11:25*) **forgive them**