

# Mark 11 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- [Mark 11:1](#)
- [Mark 11:2](#)
- [Mark 11:3](#)
- [Mark 11:4](#)
- [Mark 11:5](#)
- [Mark 11:6](#)
- [Mark 11:7](#)
- [Mark 11:8](#)
- [Mark 11:9](#)
- [Mark 11:10](#)
- [Mark 11:11](#)
- [Mark 11:12](#)
- [Mark 11:13](#)
- [Mark 11:14](#)
- [Mark 11:15](#)
- [Mark 11:16](#)
- [Mark 11:17](#)
- [Mark 11:18](#)
- [Mark 11:19](#)
- [Mark 11:20](#)
- [Mark 11:21](#)
- [Mark 11:22](#)
- [Mark 11:23](#)
- [Mark 11:24](#)
- [Mark 11:25](#)
- [Mark 11:26](#)
- [Mark 11:27](#)
- [Mark 11:28](#)
- [Mark 11:29](#)
- [Mark 11:30](#)
- [Mark 11:31](#)
- [Mark 11:32](#)
- [Mark 11:33](#)

---

John Mark

## MARK: THE SERVANT JESUS

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll-right side of page

## THE LIFE OF CHRIST SHOWING COVERAGE BY MARK (SHADED AREA)

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

**Mark 11:1 As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples,**

- when: Mt 21:1-11 Lu 19:29-40 Joh 12:14-19
- at the: Mk 13:3 2Sa 15:30 Zec 14:4 Mt 24:3 26:30 Joh 8:1 Ac 1:12
- he: Mk 6:7 14:13
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Bethany, Bethphage, Mount of Olives

## ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

**Paul Apple - The Reception That Wasn't** - Following the confession of Peter in chap. 8 that Jesus is truly the Messiah, we have seen a growing sense of anticipation and drama in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus has set His face like flint to head to Jerusalem where He will fulfill His mission as the Suffering Servant. He has been educating His closest disciples about what type of Messiah He is. He has been explaining over and over that He is much more than just a political revolutionist who will bring about national restoration and throw off the bonds of Roman oppression. He is headed for rejection and suffering and death at the hands of both the Jewish religious leaders and the Roman officials. His hour has almost come to glorify the Father. This is why He came into the world as God incarnate. Today we see Jesus arrive in Jerusalem. I cannot overstate the significance of this great event. **Look at what % of the gospel accounts deal with the final week of Jesus' life on earth as He goes to the Cross – 1/3 of Mark's Gospel and 1/2 of John's Gospel cover the last seven days of Jesus' life.** Significant to understanding the identity and mission of the Suffering Servant. Various names for this event: - **The Triumphal Entry** – (maybe the Triumphal Procession would be better) - **Palm Sunday** – occurred on the first day of Passion week – either **Sunday or Monday** ([MacArthur favors Monday and calls it 'Palm Monday'](#)) (The palms were) Not some symbol of peace and pleasantness as in our Sunday School classes with young children but symbol of Maccabean revolt by political revolutionaries -- The Palm branches signify the expectation of a military victory of their king over the occupying Romans. Look at Rev. 7:9+ the martyrs coming out of the Great Tribulation ("palm branches were in their hands;"). - What should we call it? **The Reception That Wasn't** ([John MacArthur calls it "The False Coronation of the True King"](#))– looking not so much at the procession but what took place upon His arrival. **Where does all this excitement and anticipation lead?** Excitement Over Jesus That Stops Short Of Worshiping Him As King Over All Quickly Fades Away.

**Akin** - Mark 11 begins the last chapter in our Lord's earthly life. Chapters 11-16 record the final week of that life. Mark devotes more than 1/3 of his gospel to "[passion week](#)." Some have referred to Mark's gospel as a "passion narrative" with an extended introduction. That is not a bad description. It will be a busy and active week culminating in his death on the cross and His glorious resurrection. It begins with his arrival in Jerusalem during Passover. Traditionally we call it "the triumphal entry." It is a clear and unambiguous declaration of His Kingship. So important is the event it is recorded in all 4 gospels (Matt 21; Mk 11; Luke 19; John 12). With His arrival "the die is cast!" There will be no turning back. The Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world (1 Pet 1:20) will now be slain in space and time. The atonement for sin ordained in eternity past now becomes historical for all to behold. Jerusalem would be a buzz with activity. During Passover the population could swell to 3 times its normal size as pilgrims from all over the world descended (better "ascended") upon it. However, this Passover would be unlike any other had or ever would be. As Paul would write in 1 Cor 5:7, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." So, in light of all this, how should we respond to the coming of our King?

**Stein** - According to the geographical organization of Mark, the present account records the first and only time Jesus enters Jerusalem. John, on the other hand, refers to several such visits in John 2:13–4:45; John 5:1–47; John 7:1–10:40; and John 12:12–20:31, and Luke suggests more than one such visit to Jerusalem in Lk 13:34 (cf. Mark 14:49).

**Hiebert** - Mark described four events which were preparatory to the public ministry at Jerusalem: the entry into Jerusalem as Messiah and the return to Bethany that evening (vv. 1–11), the cursing of the fig tree the next morning (vv. 12–14), followed by the cleansing of the temple (vv. 15–19), and the lesson from the withered fig tree to the disciples the following morning (vv. 20–25). Brooks notes, "Unlike the previous part of the Gospel, the passion narrative is characterized by specific time references." Mark alone enumerated three successive entries into Jerusalem on three successive days of Passion Week—Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday.... Mark omitted any reference to Jesus' visit with His friends at Bethany upon arriving from Jericho (John 12:1–11).

Location of Bethany - About 1.5 Miles East of Jerusalem  
Mount of Olives is Between Bethany and Jerusalem

**As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage (only here, Mt. 21:1; Lk. 19:29) and Bethany (only in Gospels), near the Mount of**

**Olives** - Both villages are east of Jerusalem on the other (east) side of the Mount of Olives ([picture](#)) (which is east of Jerusalem, directly opposite Temple Mount [[picture](#)] and about 280 feet higher [[Mount of Olives - Wikipedia](#)] = Highest point = 826 meters or 2,710 ft versus [Temple Mount - Wikipedia](#) = Highest point = 740 m 2,430 ft] separated by the Kidron Valley ([picture](#), [picture 2](#)) (John 18:1). The exact location of **Bethphage** ("house of unripe figs" but some sources actually give this as the meaning of "Bethany"!)) is not known. Most put it on the southeast side of the **Mount of Olives** and northwest of **Bethany** (beth = Hebrew for house; several meanings noted - "house of misery," "house of the poor," "house of dates," "house of Ananiah"), about 1.5 miles (3 km) east of Jerusalem. **Bethany** was two miles southeast of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho (John 11:18) and was the home of Mary, Martha and [Lazarus](#) whom Jesus had just recently prior raised from the dead (John 11:11-23, 24, 25, 26-34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45) and Jesus would stay there during the final week of His life (Mk 11:11+). (Related - [What happened to Lazarus after Jesus raised him from the dead?](#))

**Significance of city of Jerusalem** – everything in the Gospel of Mark has been targeted towards this entrance into Jerusalem – Jesus had to avoid publicity in his earlier healings and instruct people to keep quiet so he didn't draw too much attention to himself ... because he was not yet at Jerusalem for this final passion week ... but no longer; He doesn't tell Bartimaeus to be quiet; he doesn't try to hush the crowd; the time has come for open confrontation with the Jewish leaders in the city of God -- Jerusalem ([Paul Apple](#))

**William Barclay** - we know from the Jewish law that **Bethphage** was one of the circle of villages which marked the limit of a Sabbath day's journey, that is, less than a mile, while **Bethany** was one of the recognized lodging places for pilgrims to the Passover when Jerusalem was full.

**Alan Carr**: Historians tell us that the population of Jerusalem was around 80,000 at this time. During the Passover, between two and three million people would crowd into the city for the celebration. The people came in anticipation; they were looking for God to do something while they were there. God would do His greatest work of all during this Passover, but most people would miss it altogether.

**MacArthur**: "[The False Coronation of the True King](#)" -- The year is 30 A.D. by the best chronology. The month is the first Jewish month, [Nisan](#), and the arrival is on the tenth [Monday] and the crucifixion is on the fourteenth [Friday] and that all matters because God has established a very firm time table. . . **Coronations** aren't humble, they aren't unexpected. They aren't unplanned. They aren't unofficial. They aren't spontaneous. They aren't superficial. They aren't temporary. But this one was all of those. **Coronations** are not to be reversed in a few days so that the one exalted and elevated becomes rejected and executed, like this one. **This was no real coronation.** Let it be said, Jesus is the real King, deserving of all exaltation, all honor, all worship and all praise, so this is the false coronation of the true King. . . It is estimated that as many as two million people would be in Jerusalem at a Passover even in ancient days. And one of the ways we get at that is ten years after this, 40 A.D., there's a record in Jewish history that two hundred and sixty-thousand lambs were slain at that Passover, over a quarter of a million. Usually there was one lamb per ten people. That would put it at 2.6 million people possibly. It was a massive crowd. The crowd around Him must have been in the hundreds of thousands. **This was the time and this was the place to allow this to agitate His enemies so that He would die in God's perfect timing . . . according to the Mosaic Law, a sacrificial lamb for Passover was to be selected and set apart on the tenth of Nisan...the tenth was Monday and that's when the sacrificial lamb arrived. And the sacrificial lamb was to be crucified on the fourteenth and that's Friday when He was crucified.**

**Approached...sent** - both [present tense](#) as throughout this passage represents the scene as actually passing. "The repeated **historical present tenses** in this passage carry the reader along as present at the scene." (Hiebert)

**Mount of Olives** - 12x in 11v - 2 Sam. 15:30; Zech. 14:4; Matt. 21:1; Matt. 24:3; Matt. 26:30; Mk. 11:1; Mk. 13:3; Mk. 14:26; Lk. 19:37; Lk. 22:39; Jn. 8:1

**Bethany** - 12x in 12v - Matt. 21:17; Matt. 26:6; Mk. 11:1; Mk. 11:11; Mk. 11:12; Mk. 14:3; Lk. 19:29; Lk. 24:50; Jn. 1:28; Jn. 11:1; Jn. 11:18; Jn. 12:1

Significance of Mount of Olives: End Time events A North to South ridge about 2 miles long across from the Kidron Valley just East of Jerusalem, known for its abundance of olive trees; center part rises 100 ft higher (actually more like 280 ft higher) than Jerusalem

- Ezek. 11:23+ – at the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC Ezekiel had a vision of the glory of the Lord departing from Jerusalem and settling on the Mount of Olives
- Zech. 14:4+ "In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south." – scene of final judgment and the return of the Lord in victory

- Zech 14:9+ “And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.”

**NET NOTE** - "Mountain" in English generally denotes a higher elevation than it often does in reference to places in Palestine. The **Mount of Olives** is really a ridge running north to south about 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) long, east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. Its central elevation is about 30 meters (100 ft) higher than Jerusalem. It was named for the large number of olive trees which grew on it.

Expositors says: “It is first stated generally that they approach Jerusalem, then Bethphage and Bethany are named to define more exactly the whereabouts. Both villages are named: partly because close together, partly because, while Bethphage was the larger and the better known place, and therefore might have stood alone as an indication of locality, Bethany was the place where the colt was to be got.”

**He sent (apostello) two of His disciples (mathetes)** - As noted **sent** is [present tense](#), the so-called historical present (see [note above](#)). We are not told who Jesus dispatched, or "commissioned", on this mission. What is stated in the following section is that the two who were sent went in obedience even though it was surely to them somewhat of a strange order by Jesus. In Mark 6:7 Jesus sent the 12 out in pairs to preach and here sends one pair out to [procure](#).

---

**Sent** (649)([apostello](#) from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off, to send forth, to send out. To send out; to commission as a representative, an ambassador, an envoy. The idea is to send forth from one place to another. But the meaning of [apostello](#) is more than just to send because it means "to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished" (Wuest) To send upon some business (Mt. 2:16; 10:5; 20:2). To send away in the sense of to dismiss (Mk 12:3, 4). To send or thrust forth as a sickle among corn (Mk 4:29). Uses in Mark - Mk. 1:2; Mk. 3:14; Mk. 3:31; Mk. 4:29; Mk. 5:10; Mk. 6:7; Mk. 6:17; Mk. 6:27; Mk. 8:26; Mk. 9:37; Mk. 11:1; Mk. 11:3; Mk. 12:2; Mk. 12:3; Mk. 12:4; Mk. 12:5; Mk. 12:6; Mk. 12:13; Mk. 13:27; Mk. 14:13

---

#### **Question - [What is the significance of Bethany in the Bible?](#)**

**Answer:** Bethany was a village in Judea about two miles east of Jerusalem (John 11:18), a distance considered a “Sabbath day’s journey” (Acts 1:12). Bethany was situated on the well-traveled road to Jericho. Some scholars think Bethany was more like a modern subdivision or a neighborhood rather than an entire town. The edges of Bethany reached to the [Mount of Olives](#) and also bordered Bethphage, a suburb of Jerusalem.

Bethany is probably best known for being the hometown of Jesus’ good friends, Mary, Martha, and [Lazarus](#). Bethany was the place where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1, 41–44), it was the home of Simon the leper (Mark 14:3–10), and it was the place where Mary [anointed Jesus’ feet](#) with perfume (Matthew 26:6–13). Other references to Bethany are Mark 11:1 and Luke 19:29, which describe the preparations for Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the cursing of the fig tree in Mark 11:11–13, and the place where Jesus stayed overnight during His final week of earthly ministry, between His [triumphal entry](#) and His crucifixion (Matthew 21:17).

The name *Bethany* is translated by some to mean “house of figs,” as there are many fig trees and palms in the area; others translate it as “house of misery,” speculating that Bethany was a designated place for the sick and those with contagious diseases.

Bethany is also significant as the place near which Christ ascended back into heaven (Luke 24:50). Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus gathered His eleven disciples to give them final instructions before He left the earth (Luke 24:50–51). He took them to the Mount of Olives, in “the vicinity of Bethany” (verse 50), where He blessed them and commissioned them. The Lord was then lifted up into the clouds (Acts 1:9). As the disciples stood staring upwards, two angels appeared to them and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Bethany has an exciting future prophesied. Zechariah 14:4 says, “On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east.” When Jesus returns to set up His kingdom, it will be to the very place He left: the Mount of Olives near Bethany. Though the ancient town of Bethany may have been small and seemingly insignificant, it will be the scene of a world-changing event: the glorious return of Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:11–16). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

---

#### **Question - [What happened on the Mount of Olives?](#) (see more resources [below](#))**

**Answer:** The Mount of Olives, sometimes referred to as “Olivet” in the KJV (2 Samuel 15:30; Acts 1:12) or “the mount facing

Jerusalem” (1 Kings 11:7 = read the horrible context describing King Solomon's idolatry - 1 Ki 11:1-12), is a ridge running along the east side of Jerusalem, separated from the city walls by a ravine and the Brook Kidron. The Mount of Olives was the site of many events in the Bible and will be the site of a yet-future fulfillment of prophecy.

In the Old Testament, the Mount of Olives is mentioned once in relation to King David. When David's son Absalom wrested control of Jerusalem, David and his loyal followers fled the city via an eastern route: “David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up” (2 Samuel 15:30). Later, King Solomon used the Mount of Olives for idol worship: “On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites” (1 Kings 11:7). In one of Ezekiel's visions, the prophet sees the glory of the Lord depart from Jerusalem and come to rest “above the mountain east of it” (Ezekiel 11:23).

Jesus made many visits to the Mount of Olives (Luke 21:37). In fact, it was “usual” for Him to go there when in the vicinity of Jerusalem (Luke 22:39). Every time Jesus visited [Lazarus](#) and Mary and Martha, He was on the Mount of Olives, for their village of Bethany was situated on the eastern slope. The road from Bethany to Jerusalem lay over Olivet.

The Bible records Jesus' visiting the Mount of Olives three times in the last week of His earthly life, and each time something of significance happened. The first visit is what we call the [triumphal entry](#). The donkey Jesus rode that day was found in the area of Bethany and Bethphage, on the east side of the Mount of Olives (Luke 19:29–30). Then, “when he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen” (verse 37). While still on the Mount of Olives, Jesus looked at the vista in front of Him, wept over the city, and pronounced a judgment against it (verses 41–44).

Jesus' second visit was to deliver what has come to be known as the [Olivet Discourse](#), recorded in Matthew 24:1 —25:46. Parallel passages are found in Mark 13:1–37 and Luke 21:5–36. The content of the Olivet Discourse is Jesus' response to His disciples' question “When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?” (Matthew 24:3). Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24–25 primarily concerns the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the future tribulation period, and the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation. The Discourse includes parables about those who wait for the Master's coming—the wise and faithful servant (Matthew 24:45–51), the five wise virgins (Matthew 25:1–13), and the good servant who uses his resources wisely (Matthew 25:14–30).

Jesus' third visit during the week of [His passion](#) was on the night He was betrayed. That evening began with the Last Supper in Jerusalem and ended in the [Garden of Gethsemane](#) on the Mount of Olives. During that last Passover meal, Jesus washed His disciples' feet and then revealed Judas as the betrayer (John 13:1–30). At the conclusion of the meal, Jesus established the New Covenant and instituted the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26–29; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26). Then He took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane (literally, “Garden of the Oil-press”) located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. There Jesus prayed in agony as He contemplated the day to come. So overcome by the horror of what He was to experience in the crucifixion the following day that His sweat was “like drops of blood” (Luke 22:44) and God sent an angel from heaven to strengthen Him (Luke 22:43).

After Jesus prayed, Judas Iscariot arrived with a multitude of soldiers, high priests, Pharisees, and servants to arrest Jesus. Judas identified Jesus by the prearranged signal of a kiss, which he gave to Jesus. Trying to protect Jesus, Peter drew a sword and attacked a man named Malchus, the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus rebuked Peter and healed the man's ear, displaying the miraculous power of God (Luke 22:51). Nevertheless, the mob arrested Jesus and took Him to face trial, while the disciples scattered in fear for their lives.

After the trials, crucifixion, and resurrection, Jesus once again stood on the Mount of Olives. During His final post-resurrection appearance, Jesus led His disciples “out to the vicinity of Bethany, [and] he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:50–52). Acts 1:12 specifies that “the vicinity of Bethany” was indeed the Mount of Olives.

Immediately following Jesus' ascension, two angels told the disciples on the Mount of Olives that “this same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). According to the prophet Zechariah, Jesus will return not only in the same way, but to the same place. In a prophecy related to the end times, Zechariah declares, “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south” (Zechariah 14:4). The very location where David wept in defeat and where Jesus was betrayed and rejected will be the place where Jesus returns in triumph over all His enemies.

(Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

---

**Mark Akin on the Mount of Olives** - We should also take note, without running past it too quickly, of the importance of the Mount of

Olives (v. 1) in biblical and redemptive history. – The **Mount of Olives** is a ridge about two and a half miles long. It rises to a height about 2700 feet, 200 feet higher than Mount Zion. The view from its summit is breath-taking. Its crest is less than a mile directly east of Jerusalem. It is known for its many olive trees. Significant historical events:

1. Its slopes were the path of David's retreat from Jerusalem to escape capture by Absalom (2 Sam 15:30-32).
2. On this mount Solomon grieved God by erecting idols for his foreign wives to worship (1 Kings 11:1-10).
3. On this mount Jesus wept over the disobedience and blindness of Jerusalem (Lk 19:41-44).
4. Ezekiel witnessed the Glory of God on the Mount of Olives (Eze. 11:23).
5. Jesus, the Son of David made his royal entry into Jerusalem from here. (Mk 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40; Matt 21:1-10; John 12:12-13).
6. The disciples witnessed Jesus' ascension into glory on this mount (Lk 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-12).
7. In Acts 1:10-11 Jesus said He would come again in the same way you have watched him go. Zechariah 14:4-5 tells us what will happen when those holy feet touch down once again where He left, "On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him."

---

### A SPECIAL COMMISSION - James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose Mark 11:1–10

"Our lives they are well worth the living,  
When we lose our small selves in the whole,  
And feel the strong surge of being  
Throb through us, one heart and one soul.  
Eternity bears up each honest endeavour,  
The life lost for Him is life saved, and for ever."  
—Lucy Lancom.

The dark shadow of the Cross was already falling heavily across the pathway of the Lord Jesus. Just four days, then the Crucifixion. Yet how calm the Lord is, how careful about every detail concerning His entry into the holy yet deceitful city! Yes, that the Scripture might be fulfilled (Zech. 9:9). What lessons have we here—

**I. The Lord's Commission.** "He sent forth two of His disciples, saying, Go your way into the village" (Mark 11:2). This simple commission, like the great one mentioned in Matthew 28:18, 19, is a revelation of his character. How full of meaning His words are. Does these words not reveal—

**1. HIS FAITH.** "Ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat." How could He know except by faith. He reckoned on the fulfilment of the prophetic Word (John 12:14, 15). Was it not the confession of His enemies that "He trusted in God?" (Matt. 27:43). True, He was God, but we are to remember that He emptied Himself, and "took upon Him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7). Oh, for such an honest, simple, expectant faith!

**2. HIS OBEDIENCE.** "Say ye that the Lord hath need of him." He must needs enter Jerusalem riding on the foal of an ass, because He knew that it was the will of His Father. It may be humbling to Him, but it was honouring to God and His Word, and perhaps His physical weakness intensifies this need. Blessed weakness that makes us more fit for the accomplishing of the Father's will.

**3. HIS ASSURING CONFIDENCE.** "And straightway he will send him hither." He encouraged His disciples to act on His Word, just as He Himself was acting on the Father's Word. Believe and thou shalt see.

**II. The Disciples' Acceptance of the Commission.** Observe—

#### 1. THEIR OBEDIENCE.

"They went their way." They stepped forth on the strange errand by faith in His Word. His promise was all they had; it was all they needed. Peter walked on the water at the simple bidding of Jesus. They did not reason with one another, they obeyed from the heart. What a precious lesson on the life of faith!

#### 2. THEIR EXPERIENCE.

"They went their way, and found even as He had said unto them" (Luke 19:32). It is not always so? When we venture out on His Word, do we not find it just as He said? Is it not so with salvation (John 3:36)? He promises salvation to those who believe on Him. Trust Him, and you will find it even as He said. Is it not so with the



deeper life of consecration? Rest on His Word, and it will be fulfilled in your experience.

### **3. THEIR TESTIMONY.**

When they were asked, "What do ye, loosing the colt? they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded." Their commission was from the Lord, so they must use His Name and declare His will. As ambassadors for Christ we don't seek colts (souls) for ourselves, but for Jesus. We have, like these two disciples, to make known His will, depending on His power to give the willing mind. Not seeking our own honour, but His who sent us.

## **III. The Result which Followed.** His word was fulfilled, His will done, and—

### **1. HIS COMING WAS HONOURED.**

"Many spread their garments in the way." This is a small matter when we consider how the Lord stripped Himself for us. He who was rich, for our sakes became poor. Jonathan stripped himself for David. Let us lay the garments of our glory in the dust and crown Him Lord of all.

### **2. HIS NAME WAS PRAISED.**

They cried, "Hosannah! blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." Hosannah means, "Save, I beseech thee." Such prayer and praise go well together. Well may He be praised, for He has come, not to be ministered unto, "but to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). In the Name of the LORD He has come, and he will finish the work the Father hath given Him to do. "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1:29).

### **3. HIS KINGDOM IS ACKNOWLEDGED.**

"Blessed be the kingdom of our father David." "Blessed be the KING that cometh" (Luke 19:38). The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The foundation was laid at Calvary. The characteristics of it are imparted to us through faith in His Name. As the King of Israel He was put to death, so just now His kingdom is not of this world. "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). Has this humble, royal Saviour had such an entrance into your heart and life as He had into Jerusalem, or are you among those who once cried "Hosanna!" but now art gone with the course of this world, and are by your heartless indifference crying, though inaudibly, "Away with Him, we will not have this Man to rule over us?"

---

## **Related Resources:**

- American Tract Society [Bethphage](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Bethphage](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Bethphage](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Bethphage](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Bethphage](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Bethphage](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Bethphage](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Bethphage](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Bethphage](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Bethphage](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Bethphage](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Bethphage](#)
- American Tract Society [Bethany](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Bethany](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Bethany](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Bethany](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Bethany](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Bethany](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Bethany](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Bethany](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Bethany](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Bethany](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Bethany](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Bethany](#)

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Bethany](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Bethany](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Bethany](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Bethany](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Bethany](#)

## Croft Pentz - CHRIST'S AUTHORITY—Mark 11

### I. THE CHRIST—Mark 11:1–11

- Request—Mark 11:1–3. A colt for Christ to ride.
- Respect—Mark 11:4–6. They respect the wishes of Christ.
- Reception—Mark 11:7–11. The people make Christ king. They take palm branches and clothes, putting them upon the road which Christ would travel.

### II. THE CURSE—Mark 11:12–14

- Desire—Mark 11:12. Jesus was human. He became hungry.
- Disappointment—Mark 11:13. The fig tree had no fruit. Some Christians are like this tree, producing no fruit. See John 15:1–8.
- Denouncement—Mark 11:14. The tree is cursed because it bore no fruit.

### III. THE CLEANSING—Mark 11:15–18

- Cleansing—Mark 11:5. Christ cleansed the temple because it was being used for the wrong purpose. The church is the house of God!
- Command—Mark 11:16–17
  - Worship. The church as a house of prayer.
  - Wrong. The people made the temple a den of thieves.
- Confusion—Mark 11:18. The scribes and chief priests were jealous and even fearful of Christ.

### IV. THE CONTROL—Mark 11:9–26

- The facts—Mark 11:19–21. The tree which Christ cursed dried and withered away.
- The faith—Mark 11:22–26
  - Encouragement and faith—Mark 11:22. Continually having faith.
  - Faith and not doubting—Mark 11:23. Believe before you see.
  - Believing faith—Mark 11:25–26. If we expect God to forgive our sins, we must be willing to forgive others.

### V. THE CHALLENGE—Mark 11:27–33

- Question asked—Mark 11:27–28. What authority did Christ have to cleanse the temple, curse the fig tree, and perform other miracles? The Jews were seeking ways to destroy Christ.
- Question answered—Mark 11:29–33. He answers a question by asking a question. By doing this, He trapped the Jewish leaders. They could not answer Him.

**Mark 11:2** 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.

- Mt 21:2,3 Lu 19:30,31
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:2 saying to them, "**Go** into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me.

Luke 19:30; 31 saying, "**Go** into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here.

**GO GET  
THE COLT**



Don't get confused. The **colt** is a donkey as we see in Mt 21:2 above.

**And said to them, "Go into the village opposite you - Go** is a command in the [present imperative](#) which they promptly obey. While they may not fully understand why they are being sent on this errand for Jesus, they do not question Him. John 12:16 says "These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him." The Greek literally reads "the village lying before you." Jesus has just commanded the healed Bartimaeus to **go** ([present imperative](#)) but he actually begins to follow Him. (Mk 10:52) He had just instructed the rich young ruler to **go and sell** all you possess, but sadly he just heeded the first part of Jesus' two part command. Most feel that **the village opposite you** refers to Bethphage.

**THOUGHT-** When Jesus tells us to "**Go**" through His Word and Spirit and prayer, then we need to heed without hesitation, doubt or questioning. Like these first disciples we may not fully understand in this life why we are to go (cf Jn 12:16), "for now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1 Cor 13:12).

**Go** (go away) ([5217](#))/([hupago](#) from **hupo** = under or denoting secrecy + **ago** = to go) means literally to lead under or to bring under and is used in this sense only once in the only use in the Septuagint/Lxx in Ex 14:21 (to translate "swept... back" - caused to recede). Most commonly **hupago** means to go, to go away, to withdraw one's self (e.g., of Jesus' departure from the world (Jn 8:14, etc). **Hupago** has the notion of withdrawing. The idea of **hupago** is not so much of preceding to a definite point, but of leaving the present scene. In other words, it often means 'to go', with the implication of going in a certain direction, as to the house of Jairus (Lk 8:42). **Hupago** is used most often in the Gospels (70x) and is frequently (36x) used as a command ([present imperative](#)) calling for one to continually go (go away, depart), most of these commands being issued by Jesus. **These uses repeatedly by our Lord testify to His authority of Christ=** over physical illness (Mt 8:13); directing His followers on mission (Lk 10:3); directing the disciples with details for His triumphal entry (Mark 11:2); Satan (or demons) to go (be gone, go away). (Mt 4:10, 8:32, 16:23, Lk 11:8). It is notable that Jesus does not need to engage in a "power struggle" over the demonic forces, usually commanding them to with this one verb hupago! Go! Uses in Mark - Mk. 1:44; Mk. 2:11; Mk. 5:19; Mk. 5:34; Mk. 6:31; Mk. 6:33; Mk. 6:38; Mk. 7:29; Mk. 8:33; Mk. 10:21; Mk. 10:52; Mk. 11:2; Mk. 14:13; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 16:7

**Brian Bell** - His Going Public: He was purposely *going public*. He was promoting a public demonstration. Never before. He had repeatedly withdrawn from the crowds. But now He invited it. He courted danger & did it with calculated purpose. Jesus was demonstrating His omniscience/His all-knowingness. He was in control of the whole situation. I like that. That brings me comfort today. He has all the details of my life figured out. (AND) We can all find encouragement from the fact that Jesus enlisted the donkey in His service!

**William Barclay** - The prophets of Israel had always had a very distinctive method of getting their message across. When words failed to move people they did something dramatic, as if to say, 'If you will not hear, you must be compelled to see' (cf. specially 1 Kings 11:30-2). These dramatic actions were what we might call acted warnings or dramatic sermons. That method was what Jesus was employing here. His action was a deliberate dramatic claim to be the Messiah. ([Mark 11 Commentary](#))

**And immediately** ([euthus](#)) **as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat - Immediately...you will find** means they will not need to search but will know that this colt is the colt. Literally "a colt tied there on which no one of men has ever sat." How did Jesus know there would be a **colt tied**? This is clearly a reflection of the exercise of His omniscience. As an aside, have you ever ridden a horse? I have been thrown off one horse into a patch of prickly pears! Not fun! Here Jesus directs the disciples to an unriden (and unbroken) colt. The Creator of the colt would have no difficulty riding on it even though it had never been ridden! The creature would obey its Creator.

**Constable** has an interesting comment - The Mosaic Law specified that an animal devoted to a sacred purpose had to be one that had not been used for ordinary purposes (Numbers 19:2; Deuteronomy 21:3). Jesus told the disciples to bring both the colt and its mother to Him (Matthew 21:2). The colt was unbroken, and Jesus was able to ride on it comfortably. These facts suggested that Jesus might be the sinless Man who was able to fulfill the Adamic Covenant mandate to subdue the animals (Genesis 1:28; cf. Matthew 17:27), the Second Adam.

**Sproul** - Donkeys, just like horses, usually had to be broken in to become functional beasts of burden. Yet the principle in the Jewish culture was that no one was allowed to ride on the king's horse or the king's donkey. Only the king could ride his beasts. That is why Jesus specifically asked for a colt that had never been ridden; it was the colt prepared for the King.

**Hiebert** - the colt would not have been used as long as it was running with its mother. Unused animals were regarded as specially

suiting for sacred purposes (Num. 19:2; Deut. 21:3; 1 Sam. 6:7). This was in keeping with the unique nature of the intended rider.

This reminds us of the conditions that will transpire when the Creator Himself is ruling His creation from Jerusalem in the Millennium...

Isaiah 11:6-9+ And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

**Colt** (4454)(**polos**) is a young animal, a foal, the young of the horse or donkey colt, foal. It refers to an animal that is old enough to use. In the NT a donkey's colt young donkey for Matthew says "a donkey tied there and a **colt** with her." (Mt 21:2). John 12:16 says "a donkey's **colt**." **BDAG** says **polos** can then refer to "any 'young animal' [Aristot. et al.], the term being applied to any young animal born of its kind, from an elephant to a locust, depending on context." Gilbrant says in Classical Greek "The word *pōlos* occurs in classical Greek as early as Homer (Eighth Century B.C.) and appears on inscriptions and in papyrus documents of the New Testament world. In most cases it denotes the colt of a horse. Standing alone, the word does not indicate whether the animal is male or female. It is also used in the Septuagint where it usually translates 'ayir, "the stallion of an ass.""

**Polos** - 12x in 11v - Matt. 21:2; Matt. 21:5; Matt. 21:7; Mk. 11:2; Mk. 11:4; Mk. 11:5; Mk. 11:7; Lk. 19:30; Lk. 19:33; Lk. 19:35; Jn. 12:15

**Polos** in Septuagint - Gen. 32:15; Gen. 49:11; Jdg. 10:4; Jdg. 12:14; Prov. 5:19; Zech. 9:9; Most of these OT uses refer to a donkey.

[Alan Carr](#) - The Lord needed that donkey to fulfill His mission here on earth, v. 3. Isn't that amazing? Jesus is God and He could have done this anyway He chose to, but He chose to use that little donkey. By the way, He is still using little donkeys to get His work done on earth. He uses the likes of you and me. He certainly does not need us, but He has graciously chosen to make us part of His plan! He could have assigned the task to angels, but He chooses to work through human instruments. I am glad to be a part of the Lord business. I am glad He can use a little donkey like me!...When that donkey came back, it was better than it was when it left. When it left, it was unbroken and untried. When it came home, it was ready for the saddle. That's just what the Lord does! He takes when we give Him and when He gives it back, it is far better than it was when He got it...Give Him your broken, sin-scarred life and He will give you back a new start, a new life and a home in Heaven!)

### **The Donkey,**

*G.K.Chesterton*

When fishes flew and forests  
walked And figs grew upon thorn,  
Some moment when the moon was blood  
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry  
And ears like errant wings,  
The devil's walking parody  
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
Of ancient crooked will;  
Starve, scourge, deride me:  
I am dumb, I keep my secret still.

**Fools! For I also had my hour;  
One far fierce hour and sweet:  
There was a shout about my ears,  
And palms before my feet.**

**Untie it and bring it here** - **Untie** is [luo](#) a command in the [aorist imperative](#) calling for immediate, urgent response.

In this section it is fascinating in that we see a mixture of the attributes of Jesus coming into play as the drama of redemption crescendos - His dominion, power and authority (riding an unbroken colt, cleansing temple), His omniscience (details of colt), His humility (to ride in on a donkey)

**Hiebert** - Matthew indicates that both the mare and her colt were brought. "The unbroken animal would be quieter, if the mother was with him."

**Akin** has a fascinating comment - As the Ark of the Covenant needed an unyoked carrier (1 Sa 6:7; cf. Nu 19:2; Dt 21:3), so the true Ark of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus, required an unriden animal for this sacred assignment. It is bringing the Holy One into Jerusalem.

**Untie** (loose, untie, unbind) ([3089](#))([luo](#)) means to loose, release, dissolve. The basic meaning is to **loose** that which is fastened or bound and thus to unbind or untie. **Literally** to untie something (colt = Mt 21:2, = Mk 1:7+, Lk 3:16+, Jn 1:27+ = sandal thong, man [\[Lazarus\]](#) wrapped in bandages = Jn 11:44 = "Unbind him, and let him go."), break the seals of a scroll (Re 5:2 - secular use described "broken seals of a will", or "of the opening of a document" or "a letter"), release from prison (Ac 22:30+ cp release of angels and/or the devil = Re 9:14,15+, Rev 20:3, 7+).

---

### The First Palm Sunday - Henry Morris

"And [Jesus] saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him" (Mark 11:2).

On that first Palm Sunday, over 1,960 years ago, the Lord Jesus fulfilled the ancient prophecy of Zechariah 9:9: "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." Always before, so far as all records indicate, Jesus walked wherever He went.

Now He must ride! So He borrowed, from some unknown friend in the village, an ass's colt, upon which He could enter the city of the great King.

Although Jesus' circumstances seemed far too lowly for Him to claim a throne, He did indeed come, having salvation for the few who would receive Him. Most of the people, of course, and almost all their leaders, crowned Him only with thorns, and then made a cross His throne.

There was one who recognized Him, however. The colt He requested was a colt "whereon never man sat," and one can be sure that such a colt could not be ridden by any ordinary man without vehement protest and rejection.

Once long ago, the Lord had opened the mouth of an ass and "the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet" (2 Pet. 2:16). The animals were originally created to be under man's dominion (Gen. 1:26-28), and it was only the entrance of sin into the world that caused the dread of man to come on them (Gen. 9:2). When the true Son of Man and true King of creation calls, then the creatures of the animal kingdom respond, even though His human creatures, whom He loves most of all, still refuse to submit to His rule.

**Mark 11:3 "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."**

- that: Ps 24:1 Ac 10:36 17:25 2Co 8:9 Heb 2:7-9
- and straightway: Mk 14:15 1Ch 29:12-18 Ps 110:3 Ac 1:24
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:3 "If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

Luke 19:31+ "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say, 'The Lord has need of it.'"

## THE LORD HAS NEED OF IT

If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' - Once again in His omniscience Jesus anticipates a question from others when the disciples untie the colt. They will not be accused of robbery.

**THOUGHT** - Is there anything we have of which we might say "The Lord has need of it?" It is a question worth asking ourselves.

**You say, 'The Lord has need of it'** - This is incredible that the Lord would need anything for He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things! Clearly, He willingly humbled Himself, even to be in the position to need things like any other man or woman. He identified with us in expressing His need. As an aside, all of us are in daily need of His amazing grace. The words **has need** are the same Greek words translated "had need" in Mark 2:25YLT+ to justify David's eating "the bread of the Presence" when he and his men were hungry. David's greater Son is here and He, the Lord, **has need!** Note that Jesus is now referring to Himself as "**Lord (kurios)**" one implication being that He is in fact the real "Owner" of the colt! Clearly "**the Lord,**" Who planned out the [passion week](#) to the last detail, is in complete control of the situation.

[Brian Bell](#) - The Lord had need of it & He has need of you. Like Philip & the Ethiopian Eunuch. The Lord had need of Philip. In His sovereignty & grace God has given you & me the privilege of being used to tell other people about the Lord. Riding a donkey was a kingly act which identified Him with the royal line of David. It was a royal animal during King David's reign. After him, the Hebrew kings switched to horses, & the donkey was considered unsuited to the dignity of Kings.

As **Akin** says "From the moment He enters Jerusalem the prerogatives of deity are present. Jesus is Lord and Master of every detail of His divine destiny. He knows what will happen and when it will happen. It will all go according to plan."

**THOUGHT** - Jesus' omniscience and absolute control extend to every detail of our lives, yea, even every hair of our head (Mt 10:30,31+), so why should we worry, fret or be anxious (Beloved, I am speaking to myself on this one!)" Play [God is in Control by Twila Paris](#). (Related topics- The Providence of God and [God is In Control](#))

We worship a Lord Who is ever in complete control of every situation!

---

[Alan Carr](#) - One of the most amazing statements in the Bible is found here in verse three in verse 3, and it has to do with that little beast. It says, "**The Lord hath need of him.**" When did God ever "need" anything? Here is what God had to say about His Own needs, Psa. 50:9-12. But, that was the paradox of our Lord's earthly life. He was rich, yet He became poor, 2 Cor. 8:9.

- He owned all things, yet He possessed nothing. He created the stars, yet He had nowhere to lay His Own head, Matt. 8:20.
- He fashioned everything there is out of nothing, yet He had to borrow a boat from which to preach His Gospel.
- He created every drop of water that exists in the world, yet He cried "I thirst" as He was dying on the cross, John 19:28.
- He created every tree, but He died on a borrowed cross.
- He created every rock, but He had to borrow a tomb in which to be buried.
- He used the clouds as His chariots, Psa. 104:3, yet He had to borrow a donkey on which to ride.
- That is the paradox of His life!
- He was rich, yet made Himself poor so that those who believe on Him might enjoy His riches!

The Lord could save sinners and accomplish His work on earth just fine without us. Yet, He chooses to use frail, human instruments for His glory. When we are like that donkey, Redeemed, Released and Ruled, He can use us too. Being a little donkey isn't so bad when Jesus is your Master. Look at what that donkey did. He got to carry the King of Glory into Jerusalem. The Lord used Him as His vehicle to get glory to His name. That's what He wants to do with you and me! Let's yield to Him and let Him rule us as He sees fit. By the way, when that little Redeemed, Released, Ruled donkey walked by with Jesus on his back, nobody saw the donkey! All eyes were on the Lord Jesus. That's how it should be all time. If the Lord has spoken to you on any level through this message, you need to respond to Him. There are some here that need to be Redeemed. You need to come to Jesus. There are some here that need to be Released. Sins and the flesh hold you captive. Come to Jesus, He specialized in delivering the captives, Luke 4:18. There are some here that need to be Ruled. You need to submit to the Lordship of Jesus in your life. When you do, you will have no trouble submitting to the authorities the Lord has placed in your life. If Jesus has spoken to you on any level, you need to hear Him and heed Him today. Will you do that right now?

---

## Let It Go

Say, "The Lord has need of it," and immediately he will send it here. — Mark 11:3

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:1-11

Many years ago, when a young friend asked if he could borrow our car, my wife and I were hesitant at first. It was our car. We owned it, and we depended on it. But we soon felt convicted to share it with him because we knew that God wanted us to care for others. So we handed the keys over to him, and he traveled to a church 30 miles away to conduct a youth rally. The meeting was used by the Lord to bring teens to Christ.

Jesus instructed His disciples to take another man's donkey. The Son of God told His men to "loose it and bring it" to Him (Mark 11:2). If someone objected, they were to say, "The Lord has need of it," and they would then be permitted to lead it away. That donkey carried Christ into Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday.

There's a lesson here for us to consider. We all have things that we hold dear. We may have thought, I could never part with that. It may be a new truck, a coat, some other possession, or our precious few free hours during the week. Will we be open to give when someone obviously needs something we have?

If you sense that the Spirit is speaking to you, let your time or possession go, as the owner released his animal to Jesus. He will then be glorified as He deserves! By: David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Make me a channel of blessing today,  
Make me a channel of blessing, I pray;  
My life possessing, my service blessing,  
Make me a channel of blessing today.  
—Smyth

God gives us all we need, so we can give to others in their need.

---

## God Needs You!

If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord has need of it." —Mark 11:3

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:1-7

For His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus chose a donkey to serve as His royal transportation. His disciples were instructed to say, "The Lord has need of it" (Mark 11:3). Isn't it astounding that the Son of God should use such lowly means to accomplish His purposes? Alexander MacLaren commented on this: "Christ comes to us in like fashion, and brushes aside all our convenient excuses. He says, 'I want you, and that is enough.' "

Think of it! The Creator of the universe needs us and desires to fit us into His eternal design! Though all-powerful and not dependent on any creature, He has chosen to carry out His plans through lowly human instruments. If this were not so, He would have taken us to heaven as soon as He saved us by His grace.

Someone once asked Francis of Assisi how he was able to accomplish so much. He replied, "This may be why: The Lord looked down from heaven and said, 'Where can I find the weakest, littlest man on earth?' Then He saw me and said, 'I've found him. I will work through him, and he won't be proud of it. He'll see that I am only using him because of his insignificance.' "

You may be small in your own eyes, but God has need of you! By: Paul Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Yours is a mission you alone can fill,  
Whether it be to build or teach or till;  
Your goal may still be hidden from your view,  
But somewhere God has urgent need of you.  
—Thayer

God is looking for ordinary people for extraordinary work.

---

**And immediately ([euthus](#)) he will send it back here** - The Lord just wanted to borrow the colt for His triumphal entry! He would be kept no longer than necessary.

**Sinclair Ferguson** "His majesty and authority began to shine through from the moment of his entry into Jerusalem" (Let's Study Mark)

**Lord** (master, owner)([2962](#))([kurios](#) from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership rights and uncontested power. Kurios is used some 489 times of Jesus. Jesus is referred to as **Lord** (Kurios) more frequently than by any other title. Therefore it behooves us to understand the truth concerning **Jesus as Lord** and not allow ourselves to become side-tracked in debate over so-called "[Lordship salvation](#)". The indisputable Biblical facts are that faith in Jesus saves and Jesus is Lord (Ro 10:9,10+) This confession of "Jesus is Lord" became a direct affront to the practice of Roman [emperor worship](#). Certain cities even built temples for Caesar-worship as was the case in [Smyrna](#) where the command was to honor the emperor by confessing "Caesar is Lord". To declare "Jesus is Lord" became a crime punishable by death, resulting in the martyrdom. I think the first century believers understood "Lordship" in a way modern believers would find it difficult to comprehend! (cp Jesus' "prophetic" warning in Mt 10:22, 23, 24, 25+ where "master" is kurios)

**Boice** adds that "Citizens of the (Roman) empire were required to burn a pinch of incense to the reigning Caesar and utter the words *Kyrios Kaisar* ("Caesar is Lord!"). It is this that the early Christians refused to do and for which they were themselves thrown to the wild lions or crucified. It was not that Christians were forbidden to worship God. They were free to worship any god they chose so long as they also acknowledged Caesar. Romans were tolerant. But when Christians denied to Caesar the allegiance that they believed belonged to the true God only, they were executed. (See Boice's [Daniel: An Expository Commentary- Page 69](#))

**Wayne Detzler** writes that **kurios** - In the earliest Greek this word meant "to have power or authority." Later it came to describe one who is in control. As classical Greek developed, it became a title for men of importance. Since the gods of ancient Greece were neither creators nor lords of their fate, pagan deities were not called "lord" until much later. By the time of Christ, kings had come to be called "lord." This was true of the Roman Emperor Caligula (A.D. 37-41). It was also true of Candace, the fabled queen of upper Egypt (Ac 8:27). So too Herod the Great, Herod Agrippa I, and Herod Agrippa II were called "lord." (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#))

**THOUGHT** - **Lord** is not merely a name that composes a title, but signifies a call to action so that every saint should willingly, reverently bow down to Jesus Christ. If Christ is our **Lord**, we are to live under Him, consciously, continually submitting our wills to him as His loyal, loving bondservants ("love slaves"), always seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness (Mt 6:33+). According to this practical working "definition" beloved we all need to ask ourselves "**Is Jesus Christ my Lord?**" "**Do I arise each day, acknowledging this is the day the Lord hath made?**" (Ps 118:24+) "**Do I surrender my will to His good and acceptable and perfect will as I begin each day?**" (cp Ro 12:1+, Ro 12:2+) Beloved, don't misunderstand. None of us have "*arrived*" in this area of **Jesus as Lord** of our lives. And it is precisely for that reason that Peter commands us to continually "**grow** ([present imperative](#)) in the grace (unmerited favor, power to live the supernatural, abundant life in Christ) and knowledge (not just intellectual but more importantly transformational) of our **Lord** and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2Pe 3:18+) So do not be discouraged. Don't "[throw in the towel](#)" as they say. Keep on keeping on, pressing (continually = [present tense](#)) "on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:14+) One day, you will see that it was all worth it!

### **Alistair Begg - The Coming Kingdom - 3 Perspectives:**

#### 1) The Actions of Jesus

- a. a deliberate action – premeditation; careful planning; not spur of the moment incident; maybe Jesus had already made plans for this to take place - seen in the location of the donkey - seen in the nature of the donkey = unridden – Num. 19; Deut. 21 - seen in the password that would free it up to be taken
- b. dramatic action -- A prophetic symbolism to the way in which he will enter Jerusalem – as opposed to doing things in secret; his sitting on the donkey is dramatic – nowhere else described as riding – everywhere else He is walking



c. dangerous action – danger of being misunderstood; when people embraced the notion of His Messiahship and used the correct Scriptures, they had the wrong expectation; only afterwards that even the disciples understood his actions

## 2) The Reaction of the Crowd

a. Defined by Passion – vs. 8 – spread their cloaks on the road and cut down branches and spread them on the road; extravagant gesture – 2 Kings 9

b. Defined by Expectation – clear assertion of Messiahship; they shouted the chants of the pilgrims from Ps. 118 along the lines of the testimony of Bartimaeus; Zech. 9:9 – Who is this person and When will He come? Their passion is fueled by their expectation

c. Defined by Confusion – Didn't the blind just see? Isn't the king coming riding on a donkey? Their expectation is marred by their confusion; Triumphal Procession as opposed to Triumphal Entry – Jerusalem crowd is a different animal [does not agree that the pilgrims were fickle] They are thinking national restoration; political revolution; overturning of Roman authorities; now we will have an earthly kingdom just as we have always wanted; they hate the Romans; did not want to live in subjugation; they would have embraced this type of message; earlier tried to make Jesus king by force – if you can feed the crowd with 5 loaves and fishes you have the economic answers we need They were reading their bible selectively

3) Application to Ourselves He looked at that temple scene and could hear his own 12 year old voice – holding court with the religious authorities – “I have to be in my Father's house” – strange thing to say – now He looks around and sees a materialistic disaster zone; prostituted so that the merchants can make money; I will deal with this tomorrow; - Beware of naivety that says of people that are passionate in quoting the bible that they must be OK; here they are flat out wrong; possible to twist the Bible in wrong ways; America is full of people quoting the bible; doesn't mean they are right - Confused because they did not understand the nature of Messiahship – or the gospel message – did not like the parts about His suffering and death; selective reading; focused only on a triumphant king - Must keep the gospel in the center of my thinking, prayer and living or we might end up confused as well – creating a Jesus of our own making

**Mark 11:4 They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they untied it.**

- and found: Mt 21:6,7 26:19 Lu 19:32-34 Joh 2:5 Heb 11:8
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 “SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, ‘BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.’” 6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them,

**COMMENT** - Note that Mark does not quote Zechariah's prophecy. A gentile audience would not have been familiar with that OT book.

Luke 19:32+ So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them.

**JUST AS JESUS  
HAD DESCRIBED**

**They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they untied it** -They found things just as Jesus had described and they obeyed what He directed them to do.

Be careful what sources you read as "Numerous scholars have suggested that the present account (TRIUMPHAL ENTRY) is an early Christian myth created and read back into the life of Jesus on the basis of the church's reading of Zech. 9:9 (Bultmann 1968: 261–62; Dibelius 1934: 121–22)." (Stein)

[Alan Carr](#) - How did Jesus know this? Some writers suggest that Jesus had already been to the owners of this little donkey and



arranged for the use of the animal. They believe Jesus set this up before hand. I suppose they believe Jesus set things up with that fish that Peter caught with the tax money in its mouth, Matt. 17:27. Well, He did set it up, but not physically. He set it up in His sovereignty! These events remind us that Jesus is God and that He is in control of all things, Eph. 1:11; Isa. 46:10-11! That encourages me! So, these verses prove that Jesus is God! Which two disciples went after the donkey? The Bible doesn't say! You see, it doesn't matter who does what as long as the Lord is glorified! I wonder if those two men complained about their assignment. If they were Baptists they did. I can hear them now, "Can you believe this? After all we've done for Him; Jesus picked us for this dirty assignment." They didn't realize that they were the instruments He would use to fulfill prophecy. They were doing something far bigger than they could see. We usually are! When we are involved in the Lord's work, we are involved in big business!

#### Mark 11:5 Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"

- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'" 6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them,

Luke 19:33+ As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

**Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"**- Luke identifies the **bystanders** as the **owners** of the colt. (Lk 19:33+). This is also exactly as Jesus had warned in verse 3 that they would be asked "**Why are you doing this?**" The idea is what right do you have to untie my colt?

#### Mark 11:6 They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission.

- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them,

Luke 19:34+ They said, "The Lord has need of it."

### THE LORD HAS NEED

**They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them** - They responded to their questioners that "The Lord has need of it." (Lk 19:34+ )

**And they gave them permission** - Again the two disciples (**they spoke**) obey explicitly Jesus directive and Jesus' "predictive" (**immediately he will send it back here**) follows suit as one would expect.

**Sproul** - In the ancient world, including Israel, one of the prerogatives of the king was to commandeer a beast of burden whenever he needed it. As the King, Jesus exercised that right and commanded His disciples to get a colt.

#### Mark 11:7 They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it.

- **the colt:** Zec 9:9 Mt 21:4,5 Lu 19:35
- **and put:** 2Ki 9:13 Mt 21:7,8 Lu 19:36 Joh 12:12-16
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats.

Luke 19:35+ They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem Riding Colt

## LET THE TRIUMPHAL PARADE BEGIN

**They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it-** Things are moving fast now! Jesus had set His face like flint toward Jerusalem and the time for His royal entrance had arrived! Mark has Jesus **sat on it** while Luke 19:35+ adds that the disciples "**put Jesus on it.**"

**Akin** - Jesus has walked everywhere else in His ministry throughout Israel except for those occasions when He was riding in a boat. Now for the one and only time He rides an animal, a small colt. Matthew 21:7 more fully informs us it was a donkey and that it was accompanied by its mother....Our Lord lived His life from beginning to end in total and absolute submission to the Word of God. His life, death and resurrection were the very unfolding of the drama of redemption. No wonder He would say in John 5:39, "You search the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me."

**Hiebert** - Mark and Luke made no reference to the prophecy, but Matthew and John noted the definite fulfillment of it in the manner of Jesus' entry. He thus openly presented Himself as the fulfillment of messianic prophecy. But the very manner of His entry indicated that He presented Himself not as the political Messiah they were eagerly expecting. The ass was the animal of peaceful daily pursuits and was not associated with thoughts of conquest as the horse was. He did not present Himself as the glorious, irresistible ruler that their messianic expectations had conceived. There was a recognition that a messianic sign was being given, but its true significance was not apprehended.

**Constable** - When Israel's rulers wanted to present themselves as servants of the people, they rode donkeys (e.g., Judges 10:4; Judges 12:14). When they acted as military leaders, they rode horses (cf Jesus' Second Coming in power = Rev 19:11+). Normally pilgrims to Jerusalem entered the city on foot. Placing one's garment on the ground before someone was a sign of royal homage (cf. 2 Kings 9:12-13; 1 Maccabees 13:51).

Jesus riding in on a donkey also is a declaration of His kingship and a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 as Matthew 21:4-5 and John 12:14-15 make clear. Notice that in the following prophecy in Zechariah 9 the **two comings of Christ** are here compressed as though they were one (compare Isa 61:1-3+ cf. Lk 4:16, 21+).

Zechariah 9:9-17 **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (FIRST COMING - Note - He is King, He is coming, He is just, He brings salvation, He is humble) 10 (SECOND COMING) I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off . And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth (His Messianic Earthly Kingdom). 11 As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you (aka THE NEW COVENANT IN HIS BLOOD foreshadowed in the blood used to cut the COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM), I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. 12 Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope; This very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you. 13 For I will bend Judah as My bow, I will fill the bow with Ephraim (aka "Israel"). And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece; And I will make you like a warrior's sword. 14 Then the LORD will appear over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning; And the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, And will march in the storm winds of the south. 15 The LORD of hosts will defend them. And they will devour and trample on the sling stones; And they will drink and be boisterous as with wine; And they will be filled like a sacrificial basin, Drenched like the corners of the altar. 16 And the LORD their God will save them in that day As the flock of His people; For they are as the stones of a crown, Sparkling in His land. 17 For what comeliness and beauty will be theirs! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins.**

Matthew 21:4-5 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'"

John 12:14-15 Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, 15 "FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION;

BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY'S COLT."

Jesus riding on a donkey invokes another **OT passage in Genesis 49**, because it was considered by many Jews as a Messianic text.

Gen. 49:8-11 8 "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. 9 "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? 10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes (MESSIAH - "THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH" - Rev 5:5+), And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. 11 "He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. ([See Note](#), [See discussion of this Messianic Prophecy](#), [What does it mean that the scepter will not depart from Judah?](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Why would a king ride a donkey instead of a warhorse \(Zechariah 9:9-10\)?](#)

**Mark 11:8 And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields.**

- **cut:** Lev 23:40
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:8 Most (THIS MEANS IT NOT ALL!) of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road.

Luke 19:36+ As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road.

John 12:12 On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel." 14 Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, 15 **"FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY'S COLT."** 16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

2 Kings 9:12-13 They said, "It is a lie, tell us now." And he said, "Thus and thus he said to me, 'Thus says the LORD, "I have anointed you king over Israel.'" 13 Then they hurried and **each man took his garment and placed it under him on the bare steps, and blew the trumpet, saying, "Jehu is king!"**

## THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE

**William Barclay** - The whole picture is of a people who misunderstood. It shows us a crowd of people thinking of kingship in the terms of conquest in which they had thought of it for so long. It is oddly reminiscent of how Simon Maccabaeus entered Jerusalem 150 years before, after he had blasted Israel's enemies in battle. 'On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred and seventy-first year, the Jews entered it with praise and palm branches, and with harps, and cymbals, and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel' (1 Maccabees 13:51). It was a conqueror's welcome they sought to give to Jesus, but they never dreamed of the kind of conqueror he wished to be. ([Mark 11 Commentary](#))

**And many spread their coats (himation) in the road** - See the OT parallel above in 2 Ki 9:13. Hiebert says they spread their coats because they recognized that "the entry as messianic. They spread their outer robes in the dusty road to carpet the way for Him." Ponder their actions for a moment -- these were not rich people casting their coats in the road and in fact undoubtedly for many this was their only coat. For such a garment to be trodden under foot by a hoofed animal would undoubtedly produce significant damage so that it might be unwearable. Their willingness to risk such a great loss reflected the honor they were seeking to bestow on Jesus Who they thought was their coming King.

**Brian Bell** - He rode up the ridge to where the road starts down the Mount of Olives. Fresh pilgrims from Bethany & Bethphage have joined Him & the procession grows. When they reached that spot they caught a glimpse of the southeastern corner of the city. With its magnificent terraces & imposing towers, they broke into loud Eastern praise. These were Hebrews on Holiday!

**Sproul** - Deeply rooted in the Jewish consciousness of the Old Testament was the hope of the King who would enter Jerusalem as their coming Messiah while riding on a donkey.

**Spread** (4766)(**stronnuo**) means literally to spread (e.g., "to spread the clothes over a bed," *Liddell-Scott*). Here it describes a room arranged in a suitable manner for a **Seder** (Passover) which **Marvin Vincent** says would be "Strewn with carpets, and with couches properly spread." **Stronnuo** is used twice in the context of Jesus' "Triumphal Entry" when "Most of the crowd **spread** their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and **spreading** them in the road." (Mt 21:8 = twice, cf Mk 11:8). All uses - Matt. 21:8; Mk. 11:8; Mk. 14:15; Lk. 22:12; Acts 9:34

**and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields** - John adds that they "took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him." (Jn 12:13) As noted below these leafy branches likely symbolized the hope of the Jews that this was their conquering King Who would overturn Rome.

**Wikipedia Note on Symbolism of Palm** - The palm branch was a **symbol of triumph and victory** in classical antiquity. The Romans rewarded champions of the games and celebrated military successes with palm branches. Early Christians used the palm branch to symbolize the victory of the faithful over enemies of the soul, as in the Palm Sunday festival celebrating the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. In Judaism, the palm represents peace and plenty. (**ED NOTE**: Palm branches were also a symbol of the Maccabean revolt – now the nation of Israel will rise again; Hoping for political revolution and national restoration)

**Hiebert** - The word rendered "**branches**" properly denotes a mass of straw, rushes, or leaves strewn over the road to form a carpet of green litter. Cut from the fields indicates how the material was obtained. Matthew used a different word which denotes "branches from the trees" (21:8), while John noted that the people coming out from Jerusalem carried "the branches of palm trees" (12:13).

**Deffinbaugh** helps us set the context in the city of Jerusalem on this fateful day - One event in recent days, more than any other, brought the focus of attention on Jesus. He had just recently raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany, not two miles from Jerusalem, the citadel of opposition to Him. The scribes and Pharisees not only denounced Him, but determined to put both He and Lazarus to death (John 11:46-53; 12:10). Word had gone out that anyone who knew the whereabouts of Jesus should report it to them (John 11:57). Many of those who thronged the way to welcome Jesus to Jerusalem did so because of the report of the raising of Lazarus (John 12:17-18). In such an atmosphere, electric with excitement and expectation (and danger), the highly symbolic act of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem riding on the back of a young donkey could not be taken lightly. . . ([How Do You Spell Success? Mark 11:1-11](#))

**Paul Apple** - Think of what this event teaches us about the character of Jesus: -

- **What courage** for Jesus to come directly into Jerusalem – knowing what lay ahead for Him; to come into the temple itself despite the evil intentions of the Jewish religious leaders
- **What humility** for Jesus to come as the Suffering Servant riding on a donkey rather than as a conquering warrior riding on a regal stallion; What humility to keep His glory cloaked as He comes to the temple – the very place where the glory of God should shine the brightest – yet Phil. 2 teaches us about the Humility of Jesus
- **What obedience** on the part of the one who trusted His Father implicitly and came to fulfill all righteousness (Jn 4:34, Jn 17:4)

**Akin** - Coming in this way our Lord now proclaims openly what he has forbidden until this moment: I am your King! Jesus with purpose and intentionality presents Himself as the Messiah knowing that it will provoke a confrontation with the Jewish leaders that will result in his crucifixion. And yet, His declaration also is bathed in gracious humility. The paradoxical Kingship of Jesus shines so bright at this moment! He is royalty and deity wrapped in a single person, and yet He moves forward in His declaration to be King in lowliness, weakness and service. He does not come in pomp and circumstance. No, He comes in meekness and lowliness, He comes in humility and simplicity.

**Sinclair Ferguson** - "Think, for a moment, what Mark's record would convey to those who read it first – the Christians in Rome. No doubt many of them had seen generals enter Rome in triumph to receive the accolades of victory. How stark the contrast between Roman glory and Jesus' humility must have seemed. How mighty and powerful the sword and political power by contrast with King Jesus! Yet we know that his kingdom was established, while the glory that was Rome disappeared into oblivion. We know that what Jesus did in Jerusalem established a kingdom which would outlast all the kingdoms of this world and break in pieces every man-

centered kingdom which sets itself against it. Jesus had come to take his throne – but had committed himself to begin his reign from a cross.” (Let’s Study Mark).

---

**Question: [What is the significance of the triumphal/triumphant entry?](#)**

**Answer:** The triumphal entry is that of Jesus coming into Jerusalem on what we know as [Palm Sunday](#), the Sunday before the crucifixion (John 12:1, 12). The story of the triumphal entry is one of the few incidents in the life of Jesus which appears in all four Gospel accounts (Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19). Putting the four accounts together, it becomes clear that the triumphal entry was a significant event, not only to the people of Jesus’ day, but to Christians throughout history. We celebrate Palm Sunday to remember that momentous occasion.

On that day, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a borrowed donkey’s colt, one that had never been ridden before. The disciples spread their cloaks on the donkey for Jesus to sit on, and the multitudes came out to welcome Him, laying before Him their cloaks and the branches of palm trees. The people hailed and praised Him as the “King who comes in the name of the Lord” as He rode to the temple, where He taught the people, healed them, and drove out the money-changers and merchants who had made His Father’s house a “den of robbers” (Mark 11:17).

Jesus’ purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public His claim to be their Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Matthew says that the King coming on the foal of a donkey was an exact fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Jesus rides into His capital city as a conquering King and is hailed by the people as such, in the manner of the day. The streets of Jerusalem, the royal city, are open to Him, and like a king He ascends to His palace, not a temporal palace but the spiritual palace that is the temple, because His is a spiritual kingdom. He receives the worship and praise of the people because only He deserves it. No longer does He tell His disciples to be quiet about Him (Matthew 12:16, 16:20) but to shout His praises and worship Him openly. The spreading of cloaks was an act of homage for royalty (see 2 Kings 9:13). Jesus was openly declaring to the people that He was their King and the Messiah they had been waiting for.

Unfortunately, the praise the people lavished on Jesus was not because they recognized Him as their Savior from sin. They welcomed Him out of their desire for a messianic deliverer, someone who would lead them in a revolt against Rome. There were many who, though they did not believe in Christ as Savior, nevertheless hoped that perhaps He would be to them a great temporal deliverer. These are the ones who hailed Him as King with their many hosannas, recognizing Him as the Son of David who came in the name of the Lord. But when He failed in their expectations, when He refused to lead them in a massive revolt against the Roman occupiers, the crowds quickly turned on Him. Within just a few days, their [hosannas](#) would change to cries of “Crucify Him!” (Luke 23:20-21+). Those who hailed Him as a hero would soon reject and abandon Him.

The story of the triumphal entry is one of contrasts, and those contrasts contain applications to believers. It is the story of the King who came as a lowly servant on a donkey, not a prancing steed, not in royal robes, but on the clothes of the poor and humble. Jesus Christ comes not to conquer by force as earthly kings but by love, grace, mercy, and His own sacrifice for His people. His is not a kingdom of armies and splendor but of lowliness and servanthood. He conquers not nations but hearts and minds. His message is one of peace with God, not of temporal peace. If Jesus has made a triumphal entry into our hearts, He reigns there in peace and love. As His followers, we exhibit those same qualities, and the world sees the true King living and reigning in triumph in us. ([Source: GotQuestions.org](#))

---

**Branches of Palm Trees - Henry Morris**

“And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed them in the way” (Mark 11:8).

The account of the “triumphant entry” of the Lord Jesus on that first Palm Sunday is one of the few events in the life of Christ that is recorded in all four Gospels. As He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey’s colt, deliberately fulfilling the ancient Messianic prophesy of Zechariah 9:9 (“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee... just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon... the foal of an ass”), many of the common people were ready to receive Him as their promised Messiah, trying to lay a kingly carpet for Him as He rode.

Mark’s account says they “spread their garments in the way: and... branches off the trees,” and Matthew’s account says essentially the same, adding that “a very great multitude” was doing this (Matt. 21:8). Luke says that “they spread their clothes in the way” (Luke 19:36).

Only John notes that the tree branches which were spread as a carpet were from the palm tree. He records that the people “Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him” (John 12:13). Hence, the name Palm Sunday, the day itself being just one week before His resurrection. All four Gospels note that the multitudes called out as He rode by: “Blessed be the King that cometh in the

name of the Lord."

Their leaders all rebuked the people and soon were able to persuade them to call for His blood. "They answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25).

So it has been. The week began with such promise, only to end in rejection and hatred. So Jesus, weeping over Jerusalem, had to say: "O Jerusalem... Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:37-39). (Days to Remember)

**Mark 11:9 Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD;**

- **Hosanna:** Ps 118:25,26 Mt 21:9 23:39 Lu 19:37,38 Joh 12:13 19:15
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:9 The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!"

Luke 19:37+ As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

John 12:13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel." 14 Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, 15 "FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY'S COLT." 16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

Psalms 118:25; 26 O LORD, do save (Hebrew = hoshi`ah na = "Hosanna"), we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! 26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.

### SAVE US NOW!

**Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting** - There are two crowds, in front and behind (cf Mt 21:9). Jesus was "bookended" (so to speak) by cries "Save us now!" and He would soon answer their prayers, but not in the way that they wanted! He would answer them in a way that they needed! Luke lumps the crowds together reporting the "whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen." (Lk 19:37+) **Shouting** is [krazo](#) in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating one after another the crowd was **shouting Hosanna** (and Psalm 118:26). The cry of Hosanna would be an appeal for divine help, not an acclamation of welcome.

**Barclay** says **Hosanna** "is a simple transliteration of the Hebrew for Save now! It occurs in exactly the same form in 2 Samuel 14:4 and 2 Kings 6:26, where it is used by people seeking for help and protection at the hands of the king. When the people shouted Hosanna it was not a cry of praise to Jesus, which it often sounds like when we quote it. It was a cry to God to break in and save his people now that the Messiah had come." ([Mark 11 Commentary](#))

[Alan Carr](#) - Imagine this procession. Jesus is on a donkey and He is surrounded by throngs of common people. It was, as one writer said, a "procession of paupers". The people are waving palm branches and not swords. He is sitting on old coats and not a saddle. He is riding a little donkey and not a mighty stallion. He is surrounded by a ragtag rabble and not by strong soldiers. The Roman soldiers who saw this parade must have laughed at this Man Who would be King of the Jews. The soldiers might have seen a Roman Triumphus. In those great celebrations, victorious Roman generals would return from the battlefields with the spoils of war. Defeated kings and soldiers would be paraded through town. The victorious army would walk past cheering crowds. Elephants, tigers and lions would parade past. The victorious general would be riding in the finest of chariots pulled along by handsome horses. Thousands would cheer and Rome would vibrate with the shouts of people praising Caesar and the Roman gods. But, this, this must



have appeared to be a joke to all who saw it.

**Hiebert** explains that "Those who went before would indicate the contingent that came out from Jerusalem to meet Jesus (John 12:12–13); upon meeting the group that was with Jesus, they turned around and led the procession. Luke noted that the cries began "at the descent of the mount of Olives" (Lk 19:37), perhaps at a turn in the road where the city of Jerusalem burst into view. "

**"Hosanna!** - As noted above this is in effect is a one word prayer - Hebrew hoshi`ah na = "Hosanna" "Save now" equals "Hosanna," the word cried by the common people to Jesus when He entered Jerusalem for His final week (Mk 11:9-10) at His triumphal entry -- initially Jesus received the praises of the people, who shouted these verses as being prophetic of the Messiah (Mt 21:9 23:39 Mk 11:9-10 Lu 13:35 19:38 Jn 12:13).

**BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD** - They are quoting the Messianic Psalm Psalm 118:26 which says "Blessed is the One." Luke 19:38 alters this quote with the people "shouting: "BLESSED IS **THE KING** WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Passover celebrated the Hebrew people's liberation and deliverance out of Egypt and Psalm 118 was one of the Egyptian Hallel (Ps 113-119). And so the nation of Israel mistakenly anticipates another deliverance like God had brought about from Egypt. They saw Jesus as the Messianic Liberator Who would deliver them from Roman oppression, but they misinterpreted Psalm 118 because they had missed the crucial context that the Messiah would be a Suffering Servant before He would be a conquering King.

Note also that this blessing was voiced by the people on Palm Sunday when Christ entered Jerusalem (Mt 21:9). And when the leaders rebuked the people's praises (Lu19:37-39), Jesus then said (Mt 23:38,39) to the Jews as a nation .

**Brian Bell** - Now with the whole city is in view & the Savior begins to weep. Not with quiet tears as were described when Lazarus was risen from his grave, but with loud deep sorrow. They ceased their Hosannas & heard the Lord of the Universe wail over Jerusalem. This was a new king. in Luke 19:41-44+ His wailing turns into lamentation - "When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." By prophetic vision(seeing 4 decades into the future), the Lord saw the proud, unrepentant Holy City reduced to a pile of rubble wet with the blood of His people. They missed the things that makes for peace! - What? What did they miss? Well, repentance toward God & faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As your life stands right now, what does Jesus Christ see in your future? Judgment? Your towers pulled down? Desolation? The tears of Christ measure the infinite value of your soul.

**In the comparison below note that all four Gospels quote from Psalm 118:26 part of the Hallel sung during the Passover.** Luke changes "He" to "King" which would emphasize the royal character of the One coming. Note that "He who comes" is more literally "**the coming One**," which is a concept that had definite Messianic overtones among the Jews (see Mt. 11:3; Lk 7:19; Jn 3:31; 6:14; 11:27; Heb. 10:37). Hiebert explains that "While not naming the Messiah, the designation gave expression to the ardent yearning among the Jews for the assured coming of the promised one upon whom all their expectations for the future centered. This coming one they now welcomed in the name of the Lord, the name of Jehovah. He came in the authority denoted by that supreme name."

**COMPARISON OF THE ACCLAIM  
OF THE CROWDS  
AT JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**

<b>Matthew 21:9, 15+</b>	<b>Mark 11:9, 10+</b>	<b>Luke 19:38+</b>	<b>John 12:13+</b>
Multitudes (were) going before Him, and those who followed after (Matthew 21:9+)	Those who went before, and those who followed after (Mk 11:9+)		
<b>Hosanna</b> (Mt 21:9, 15+)	<b>Hosanna</b> (Mk 11:9,10+)		<b>Hosanna</b>
Son of David (Mt 21:9,15+)			



Branches  
of the palm trees

Blessed is **He** Who comes in  
the Name of the Lord (Mt  
21:9+)

Blessed is **He** Who comes in  
the Name of the Lord (Mk  
11:9+)

Blessed is **the King** Who  
comes in the Name of the  
Lord

Blessed is **He** Who comes in  
the Name of the Lord

the  
King

the  
King of Israel

Blessed is the coming kingdom  
of our father David (Mk 11:9+)

Peace in heaven

Hosanna  
in the highest (Mt 21:9+)

Hosanna  
in the highest (Mk 11:10+)

Glory  
in the highest!

Children were crying out in  
the temple (Mt 21:15+)

---

**HOSANNA** (Read Jn 12:12-19, Mt 21:9) - It's Sunday morning, time for the electronic church in America. Thousands lounge in their living rooms watching television. Almost every channel carries a religious program. Some preachers proclaim a clear-cut gospel message. Others, however, pace before an enraptured audience, telling them that Jesus will heal all their diseases and make them rich. "He wants you well! Poverty is of the devil!" shouts the preacher. And the swelling of applause picks up where he leaves off. People love the "gospel" of prosperity and deliverance from sickness.

Now turn back the calendar to a Sunday morning around 33 A.D. The city is Jerusalem. There's no TV, but there is a preacher who stirs the hopes of an excited crowd. For three years He's been going about Judea and Galilee, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and even raising the dead. Now He rides into Jerusalem on a colt, gladly receiving the acclaim of the crowd. But those who shout "Hosanna!" are accepting Him for what they think He will give them, not for who He is and what He came to do. They want an earthly Messiah who will provide for their material welfare, not a suffering Messiah whose death on the cross will expose their sin, provide forgiveness, and call for a life commitment.

Jesus didn't promise release from all the suffering in the world. But He did offer forgiveness, peace, eternal life, and a cross. Anything less than taking up that cross in serving Him is shallow allegiance.—D. J. De Haan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**The word easy appears only once in the New Testament,  
and then in connection with yoke.**

---

### [The Problem Within](#)

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven! Matthew 21:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: Matthew 21:1–9

A few years ago, a woodpecker began tapping on the siding of our home. We thought the problem was only external. Then one day, my son and I climbed up a ladder into the attic only to have a bird fly past our startled faces. The problem was worse than we'd suspected: it was inside our house.

When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, the crowd was hoping He would be the one to fix their external problem—their oppression by the Romans. They went wild, shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (Matthew 21:9). This was the moment they'd been waiting for; God's appointed King had come. If God's chosen Deliverer was going to begin reforming things, wouldn't He start with all the wrong out there? But in most gospel accounts, the "triumphal entry" is followed by Jesus driving out exploitative moneychangers . . . from the temple (vv. 12–13). He was cleaning house, and from the inside out.

That's what happens when we welcome Jesus as King; He comes to set things right—and He starts with us. He makes us confront the evil inside. Jesus on the donkey is like the warriors in the Trojan horse. The horse was welcomed as a symbol of peace, but its ultimate aim was unconditional surrender. Jesus our King requires the same from us. By: Glenn Packiam (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What does it mean for Jesus to be your King? Why is it vital for you to surrender your all to Him?

Dear Jesus, You're the true King. Forgive me for wanting You to only fix the problems in the world around me and not to confront the sin in my heart. Show me where I'm prone to wander and expose the ways I want to run my own life.

---

## The King Has Come

Read: Luke 19:28-44

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!—Luke 19:38

An American philosopher once asked, "If Jesus and Plato should return to earth and were to lecture on the same campus at the same time, which would I go to hear?" He concluded, "Who would choose to go and hear even so great a one as Plato talk about truth, when he might listen to the One who is the Truth?"

The cheering crowd that surged around Jesus on that first Palm Sunday responded much like that philosopher. They recognized that He had no equal, yet there was something unsettling about Him. Jesus rode calmly into Jerusalem on a donkey, although a stately war horse might have better suited the occasion. He visited the temple and then returned to Bethany (Mk. 11:11). The crowd had expected much more. They sought deliverance from Roman rule, but He came to deliver from Satan's rule. They recognized that Jesus had come from God, but they completely misunderstood His spiritual mission.

Do we pay tribute to Jesus because of who He is or just for what He can do for us? To honor Him means to obey Him and to die to our self-centered nature. The philosopher recognized Him as the Truth and the crowd saw Him as their deliverer, but we are called to submit to Him as King, the One who has come to rule in our hearts.

To be a Christian is to be a loyal subject of the King of kings.

By Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

---

## The Way To Praise Him

Read: Luke 19:28-38

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! —Luke 19:38

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem a few days before His death focused attention on Him as Lord. When Jesus sent His disciples to get the colt He was to ride, He instructed them to tell its owners, "The Lord has need of it" (Luke 19:31). And when the crowds shouted their praise, they quoted Psalm 118:26, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38).

Jesus is Lord. His name is "above every name" (Philippians 2:9). As part of His title, the word Lord refers to His sovereignty. He is the King, and every believer in Him is a member of His kingdom.

We acknowledge Jesus as Lord of our lives by bowing to His authority as King. This means that we live in obedience to Him. We can't be like the man who claimed to be a Christian and yet chose to use illegal drugs and live in an immoral relationship. When his minister confronted him, he glibly replied, "Don't worry, pastor. It's okay. I'm just a bad Christian."

It's not okay. Not at all! Not for a person who claims to be a follower of Christ (Luke 6:43-49).

Today, make sure you are honoring Him with your deeds as well as with your words. Then you can join with others in proclaiming, "Jesus is Lord!"

Take me as I am, Lord,  
And make me all Your own;  
Make my heart Your palace  
And Your royal throne.

—Pope

If you adore Christ as Savior, you can't ignore Christ as Lord.

By David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

---

### [The King's Offer](#)

The multitudes . . . cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" —Matthew 21:9

Today's Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

I have often wondered how many of those people who enthusiastically cried, "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" a few days later. Some may have been keenly disappointed, even angry, that Christ didn't use His miraculous power to establish an earthly kingdom. Hadn't He created a golden opportunity to rally popular support by parading into Jerusalem and offering Himself as King?

Many Jews failed to recognize that before Jesus would openly assert His sovereignty He had to rule in their hearts. Their greatest need was not to be freed from Caesar's rule but to be released from the chains of pride, self-righteousness, and rebellion against God. They wanted the visible kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament with all its material benefits. But the Messiah first had to die for the sins of mankind and rise again to establish the basis for a spiritual rule.

The issue is the same today. Christ does not offer immunity from life's hardships, a cure for every disease, or the promise of financial success. What the King offered then is what He offers today—Himself as the sacrifice for our sins, and a challenge to serve Him. If we accept His offer, we will not be disappointed. By: Dennis J. DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

There's no disappointment in Jesus,  
He's all that He promised to be;  
His love and His care comfort me everywhere;  
He is no disappointment to me.  
—Hallett

Putting Christ first brings satisfaction that lasts.

---

**ISAIAH 9:6** - When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the crowds cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Mt 21:9). Later that same week, however, a mob called for His crucifixion (Mt 27:22). Few people recognized Him as the one Isaiah described as Wonderful (Isa 9:6).

If there is anyone who deserves that name, it is Jesus. He is wonderful in His deity and in His selfless love that led Him from the shining glories of heaven into the darkness of this sin-cursed world. He is wonderful in His virgin birth, wonderful in His overcoming, sinless life of service, wonderful in His teachings, wonderful in His vicarious death, wonderful in His astounding resurrection, and wonderful in His ascended glory.

Someone has observed, "In Christ we have a love that can never be fathomed, a peace that can never be understood, a rest that can never be disturbed, a joy that can never be diminished, a hope that can never be disappointed, and a spiritual resource that can never be exhausted." —H. G. Bosch (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

THE VICTIM OF CALVARY  
BECAME THE VICTOR OF EASTER.

---

### [Man Of Contrasts](#)

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! — Matthew 21:9

Today's Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

On that first Palm Sunday, one might have expected Jesus the King to enter Jerusalem on a mighty steed. But He chose instead a lowly donkey. Before He could come as a King to reign, He had to come as a Savior to die. Throughout His life on earth, Jesus was a man of striking contrasts—reflecting both His genuine humanity and His full deity.

Someone once wrote this about Jesus: "He who is the Bread of Life began His ministry hungering. He who is the Water of Life ended His ministry thirsting. Christ hungered as a man, yet fed the hungry as God. He was weary, yet He is our rest. He paid tribute, yet He is the King. He was called a devil, but He cast out demons. He prayed, yet He hears prayer. He wept, and He dries our tears. He was sold for 30 pieces of silver, yet He redeems sinners. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet He is the Good Shepherd. He gave His life, and by dying He destroyed death."

We would expect to find such contrasts in the life of One who was fully God and fully man. Jesus, who is the sovereign Lord of the universe, became a man to provide for our redemption. But one day He will return as King of kings.

Jesus, the God-man, deserves all our praise. — Richard DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

---

**From Hosanna to Crucify** - (John 12:12-13). Sometimes I wonder how many of those who enthusiastically cried, "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday were shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" a few days later. People must have been disappointed, even resentful, that Christ didn't overthrow the Romans and set up an earthly kingdom. He had had a golden opportunity to rally support as He rode into Jerusalem. In contrast to His earlier actions, He didn't try to dampen this jubilant demonstration. Yet neither did he capitalize on the fervor of the crowd and issue a call to arms. Those who longed only for release from foreign domination were disillusioned. The Messiah had not fulfilled their expectations.

Jesus' contemporaries failed to recognize that before He could assert His outward sovereignty, He had to rule the inner citadel of their hearts. The Jews' greatest need was not freedom from Caesar's legions but release from the chains of their own sin. Jesus would rule in power and glory one day, but first He had to pay sin's penalty on the cross. The key to His kingdom was not revolution but repentance.

Through the centuries the issue has not changed. If we follow Christ only because we think He'll shield us from life's hardships, heal all our sicknesses, and guarantee prosperity, we're headed for disillusionment. But if we renounce sin, take up our cross, and live for Him because He is our God, our Creator, and our Redeemer, we will never be disappointed in Him. —D. J. De Haan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Putting Christ first brings satisfaction that lasts.

---

## Who Is This?

Read: Luke 19:28-40

Blessed is [He] who comes in the name of the Lord! —Luke 19:38

Imagine standing shoulder to shoulder with onlookers by a dirt road. The woman behind you is on her tiptoes, trying to see who is coming. In the distance, you glimpse a man riding a donkey. As He approaches, people toss their coats onto the road. Suddenly, you hear a tree crack behind you. A man is cutting down palm branches, and people are spreading them out ahead of the donkey.

Jesus' followers zealously honored Him as He entered Jerusalem a few days before His crucifixion. The multitude rejoiced and praised God for "all the mighty works they had seen" (Luke 19:37). Jesus' devotees surrounded Him, calling out, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (v.38). Their enthusiastic honor affected the people of Jerusalem. When Jesus finally arrived, "all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?'" (Matt. 21:10).

Today, people are still curious about Jesus. Although we can't pave His way with palm branches or shout praises to Him in person, we can still honor Him. We can discuss His remarkable works, assist people in need (Gal. 6:2), patiently bear insults (1 Peter 4:14-16), and love each other deeply (v.8). Then we must be ready to answer the onlookers who ask, "Who is Jesus?"

So let our lips and lives express The holy gospel we profess; So let our works and virtues shine, To prove the doctrine all divine. — Watts

We honor God's name when we call Him our Father and live like His Son.

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Mark 11:10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!"**

- **the kingdom:** Isa 9:6,7 Jer 33:15-17,26 Eze 34:23,24 37:24,25 Ho 3:5 Am 9:11,12 Lu 1:31-33
- **in the:** Ps 148:1 Lu 2:14 19:38-40
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:9 The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!" 10 When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" 11 And the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."

Luke 19:37+ As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" (**Related Topic** - [What does it mean that "the rocks will cry out"](#))

John 12:13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel." 14 Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, 15 "FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY'S COLT." 16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

Psalm 118:25; 26 O LORD, **do save** (Imperative - Hebrew = hoshi`ah nna = "Hosanna"), we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! 26 Blessed is the one (ESV, NIV = "he") who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.

## HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST

**Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David**- As [noted in the chart above](#), although Matthew has the Messianic title **the Son of David**; only Mark records this phrase **Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David** What **coming kingdom**? The Jews are speaking of the Messianic Kingdom but do not realize that first comes the cross and then comes the crown of the King of that future kingdom. Hiebert adds that the cry recorded by Mark is "not an Old Testament quotation but their own acknowledgment of Jesus as the fulfiller of prophecy. It was a strictly messianic tribute." Further, the phrase **coming kingdom** is "the present tense participle which represents the coming kingdom as already on its way and drawing nearer. It is no longer in a postponed and indefinite future, but in sight." (Hiebert)

**Hosanna in the highest** - Mark alone repeats these great words. **Hiebert** says "not in the highest degree but in the highest places, the very heavens themselves. Matthew recorded the impression made on the city (Mt 21:10–11); John noted that the scene evoked a feeling of despair among the Pharisees (12:19), while Luke spoke of their vain attempt to have Jesus silence the crowd (Lk 19:39–40+). Luke completed the picture by preserving the startling lament of Jesus over Jerusalem as He approached the city (Lk 19:41–44+). Mark omitted all this to fasten his attention on Jesus entering the temple."

**Mark Akin** writes that "2 Samuel 7:12-16 is being fulfilled! And it was! – Isaiah 9:1-7 is being fulfilled! And it was! – Isaiah 11:1-10 is being fulfilled! And it was! – Jeremiah 23:5-8 is being fulfilled! And it was! – Ezekiel 34:23-24 is being fulfilled! And it was! – Micah 5:2-4 is being fulfilled! And it was! – Oh, but it was not being fulfilled in the way they thought, hoped, and believed it would be. **They are right, He is their King**. But He is not here to purge Israel of foreign domination. **No, he is here to purge His people of their sin!** They are looking and longing for a temporal, political and military Savior. He, however, is bringing what only He can bring, a complete and eternal salvation of body and soul! They want and expect a Savior only for Jews, but He is a Savior for the whole world, for any and all who will believe on His Name. John 1:12 says it so well, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ..." John 3:16 says it so well, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 14:6 says it so well, "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life, No one comes to the Father except through me." Acts 4:12 says it so well, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." 1 Timothy 2:5 says it so well, "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ..." Christ's salvation and triumph

would be the victory of life over death, salvation over sin, truth over error, love over hate, forgiveness over condemnation. They cried out for salvation that day. Have you cried to Him to save you? He is the only one who can.

**Hosanna** (5164) ([Hosanna - this is a lengthy discussion of "Hosanna"](#)) is a transliteration not a translation of a Hebrew phrase composed of two Hebrew words (**hoshiya + na** - spelling varies depending on resource consulted) used only once in Ps 118:25 [See below](#)). The meaning of the original Hebrew phrase is something like "Please save!," "Help, I pray," "Save now," or "Save now, I pray!" (the exact wording depends on source consulted). As **John Piper** explains more fully [here](#), in Jesus' day the word **Hosanna** while originally signifying a cry for help, over time was not only a prayer for help (salvation), but also an invocation of blessing, an exclamation of praise, and/or a shout of celebration. As discussed below, in the context of Jesus' "Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem, the shouts of **Hosanna** from the crowd seem to have had all three nuances. >**Hosanna** would have been a term familiar to everyone in Israel which accounts for the crowds shouting "Hosanna" at the time of the Triumphal Entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem.

## Songs Related to Hosanna

**Take a few moments and worship the King of kings and I guarantee these songs below will stir your heart to praise and worship!**

**His TRUE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY will soon be seen by all (Revelation 1:7+).**

**May the prayer of our heart ever be Maranatha, Come Lord, Hosanna, Save Now. In Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen.**

- [Hosanna - Maranatha Singers \(older tune\)](#)
- [Hosanna \(Hear The Cries Of Your Children\)](#) - You may not be familiar with this one, but the words and message are beautiful!
- [Hosanna\(Come Save Your People\)](#) - my favorite as it is prayer in song
- [Hosanna \(Blessed Is He Who Comes\)](#)
- [Hosanna \(Praise Rising\)](#)
- [Hosanna in the Highest](#)
- [Hosanna - Selah](#)

---

**Question:** [What is the meaning of hosanna in the highest?](#)

**Answer:** The phrase *hosanna in the highest* appears only twice in the Bible, once in Matthew and again in Mark, during the [triumphal entry](#) of Jesus into Jerusalem. The people were crowded around the gate watching Jesus enter the city, and they were celebrating and calling out, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9, ESV). Mark 11:10 records the crowd saying, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" (ESV). The NIV translates their shout as "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

The word *hosanna* comes from a Hebrew word meaning "save now" or "save us, we pray." The first word of Psalm 118:25 is *howosiah-na*, translated "Save us!" and the crowd's use of this word at the triumphal entry was significant—especially as they waved palm branches (Psalm 118 was associated with the [Feast of Tabernacles](#)). By saying "hosanna" as Jesus passed through the gates of Jerusalem and referring to David and David's kingdom, the Jews were acknowledging Jesus as their Messiah. The Jews had been waiting a long time for the fulfillment of the [Davidic Covenant](#) (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17:11–14; 2 Chronicles 6:16), and their shouts of "hosanna in the highest" indicated the hope that their Messiah had finally come to set up God's kingdom then and there (see Luke 19:11).

By saying "in the highest," the crowd was invoking heaven's blessing on them and the salvation that the Messiah was bringing. The phrase also echoes the song of the angels in Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest" (ESV). To paraphrase the shouts of the crowd: "Save us, our Messiah, who comes to fulfill God's mission! Save us, we beseech you, as you take your rightful throne and extend heaven's salvation to us!"

Sadly, the salvation that the people of Jerusalem wanted that day was political, not spiritual. They were only interested in a temporary, worldly fulfillment of the messianic prophecies. They chose not to see the prophecies that said the Messiah would be "a man of sorrows" who would bear the griefs of His people and be crushed for their sins. His oppression and death were clearly predicted in Isaiah 53. Yes, Jesus was the Messiah they had been waiting for, and He accepted their shouts of "hosanna in the highest." He was truly Immanuel, God with us (Isaiah 7:14). But the political conquest and final fulfillment of the David Covenant



must await the second coming (Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 24:30; Titus 2:13). Before Jesus could take care of the political problems of His people, He had to take care of the sin problem.

As the people shouted “hosanna in the highest,” little did they know what that would actually mean. Jesus had come to save (Luke 19:10), but not in the manner they desired. “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22). Their cries for salvation and their demand that it come “now” were answered with the cross. God provided a spiritual salvation from the bondage of sin, bought at great cost to the Lord Jesus. But the blessed results of that salvation extend into eternity and far outweigh any temporary benefits we could experience in this world. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

---

## The Cross And The Crown

Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey. —Zechariah 9:9

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:1-11

On the day we call Palm Sunday the Lord Jesus presented Himself to Israel as their King when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Had He been astride a spirited horse, He would have looked more kingly. But Zechariah had prophesied He would come in the humble way that He did.

Why? Kings of the East rode donkeys when on errands of peace. The horse was used as a charger in war.

The multitudes thought in terms of earthly prosperity and freedom from Rome. So they cried, “Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark 11:10). Yet a few days later, the shouts of the crowd became: “Crucify Him!” (15:13).

Some who declare themselves admirers of Jesus do not recognize Him as the Savior of sinners. But our deepest need cannot be met until our sin problem is overcome. For this reason Christ rode into Jerusalem on a donkey with His face set toward the cross, knowing full well the shameful and painful death He would suffer there. Now, having paid the price for human sin, He is highly exalted at God's right hand and will come again as King of kings and Lord of lords. His cross had to precede His crown.

If we want to be part of His heavenly kingdom, we must trust Him as our Savior now. By: Herbert Vander Lugt [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

If in heaven a crown you'd wear  
And bright palms of victory bear,  
Christ the Savior you must claim;  
Find redemption in His name.  
—Anon.

There would be no crown-wearers in heaven had Christ not been the cross-bearer on earth.

**Mark 11:11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.**

- **Jesus:** Mal 3:1 Mt 21:10-16 Lu 19:41-45
- **when:** Eze 8:9 Zep 1:12
- **he went:** Mt 21:17 Lu 21:37,38 Joh 8:1,2
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL ENTERS THE HOLY TEMPLE OF ISRAEL

Don't miss that the crowd is no longer mentioned after Jesus enters the city and then the temple. The electric excitement seems to quickly have dissipated (see note below on [crowds](#)).

**Alan Carr:** Look again at this crowd. Who is there as the people wave their palm branches before Jesus and pave the road with their clothing? I would imagine **Bartimaeus** is there. I would imagine **Zacchaeus** is there. I would imagine that **Lazarus** was there, along with **Mary** and **Martha**. That crowd was full of people He had healed, delivered and ministered to and they were praising Him. I am in that parade too! It's a mighty long parade by now, but it is marching off toward eternity with Jesus in the lead. Those who know Him are still praising His name and worshipping the One Who became poor so that we might become rich in Him! ([Mark 11:1-11 Behold](#))



## [Thy King Cometh Unto Thee](#))

**Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple and after looking around**([periblepo](#) same verb in Mk 10:23+) **at everything** - Jesus dismounted and walked into the temple (the temple complex not the sacred sanctuary). Jesus goes into the magnificent temple begun by Herod the Great in 19 B.C. and not completely finished until A.D. 64 and which would be totally destroyed in A.D. 70. As he was looking around (a detail only in Mark's account) He clearly saw the corruption that was being carried out in the Temple, but He would delay in responding to that defilement. **Hiebert** points out that "The unholy traffic which He observed was confined to the [Court of the Gentiles](#)." ([See this Court](#) in diagram below) "It would soon be evident that Jesus did not like what He saw. A people and a place that was to be a light to the nations had become —a den of robbers|| (v. 17), a hideout for religious outlaws. The status quo was not acceptable and He would make that abundantly and painfully clear." (Akin)

**Paul Apple** on **looking around** - "looking around" - Looking comprehensively – not missing anything - Looking with insight – a penetrating look – seeing into the hearts and motives - Looking with sadness. Where was the crowd? What had happened to all that excitement and expectation?? What were the disciples thinking? Certainly they had expected more than this to occur after such a grand entrance. Look at how Jesus approaches the vast majority of people today – - at religious holidays like Christmas and Easter – great anticipation; then largely apathy followed by certain judgment - in the revelation of His Word -- - in the testimony of His people -- Don't ignore Jesus and cause Him to depart Look at how Jesus will approach the world from the Mt. Olives in the Last Days – that will truly be the Triumphal Entry. Simple celebration isn't discipleship. Enthusiasm isn't faith. Have you responded to Jesus as your King and Sovereign? When have you seen excitement surrounding Jesus but without genuine submission and worship?

Excitement Over Jesus That Stops Short Of Worshiping Him As King Over All Quickly Fades Away

-- Paul Apple

**Brian Bell** - What does Jesus see when He comes to our churches? As He walks up & down our aisles, moves in& out of the pews. What does Jesus see when He look around in our Temple/in our hearts/in our lives? He knows what we are like inside. When Jesus looks into your heart, what does He see?

**He left for Bethany with the Twelve, since it was already late**-- His "inspection" of the unholy activity in the Holy Temple was over, because it was late. Yes it was late in the day, but it was also "late" for the Temple. "During Passion Week the **Twelve** maintained close attendance on Jesus until the desertion of Judas (Mark 14:10) and the subsequent dispersion of the rest in the garden (Mk 14:50)." (Hiebert)

**Paul Apple** notes that Jesus was "not headed just for the city of Jerusalem, the City of David, the habitation of God but headed for the very temple itself where the glory of God should reside (**ED: SHOULD HAVE RESIDED - IT HAD DEPARTED LONG AGO! SEE Glory of God - scroll down to see departure of the glory - see also Sproul's note below**); where a holy God should meet with sinful men; where sacrifices for sin are offered daily; where the high priest ministers his sacred duties Jesus was very familiar with the temple - Remember His time there as a young boy – only 12 years old when his parents thought they had lost him and went looking and found him in the temple – the house of His father (Lk 2:43-48, 49, 50+ – He was called to be about His father's business - He had made pilgrimages to the temple before for the annual feasts

**R C Sproul:** Here is the supreme irony (**ED: AND THE SUPREME TRAGEDY FOR "HE CAME TO HIS OWN AND THOSE WHO WERE HIS OWN DID NOT RECEIVE HIM - Jn 1:11+**): In 586 BC, Ezekiel saw the glory of God leave the temple, leave the holy city, and ascend to **Bethany** on the **Mount of Olives**. AT the triumphal entry, the One Whom the Scriptures define as the brightness of God's glory (Heb. 1:3+) descended from **Bethany** and the **Mount of Olives**, entered the **East Gate of the Holy City**, and **went to the temple**. Do you see it? **In 586 BC the glory of God left the temple, but when Jesus came, the glory of God came back.** Yet no one understood that the King of glory (Psalm 24:7-10<sub>±</sub>) was in their midst, about to meet the destiny to which He was called and for which He was born.

**MacArthur:** Do you remember John 2 describes the beginning of His ministry when He did the same thing, attacked the false system, dismantled the temple? Three years later He's back and He's going to do it again. It wasn't the Romans He would attack, it was the Jews. It wasn't pagan idolatry He would attack, it was the worship of Judaism whose religion had been corrupted, whose praise was selfish and superficial.

**Hiebert** - Matthew and Luke did not note the time interval between the entry into the temple and its cleansing, but Mark's precise chronology establishes that the cleansing took place the following day. This failure to follow up the messianic acclaim given Him with some definite steps to establish His kingdom must have been a disappointment to His disciples.

**Akin** makes an interesting observation - Amazingly, nothing, not one thing happens. The enthusiastic crowds have mysteriously vanished. Was He only "King for a day?" Jesus quietly, and with no fanfare whatsoever, leaves with the 12. However, Malachi 3:1-2, a text Mark cites at the very beginning of this gospel, is lurking in the prophetic shadows, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in

whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap." – The refining fire has arrived to purify that which is putrid. – The fuller's soap has arrived to cleanse that which is filthy. • He will start His work with the temple. He will finish His work on the cross. • He acts justly wherever and whenever He judges. He is so worthy of our worship. Very few bowed before the great King the 1st time He came. However, every knee will bow when He comes again (Phil 2:9-11). Are you looking? Are you waiting? Are you ready? Here the words of the great hymn writer Isaac Watts as you think on these things.

### **Jesus shall reign where'er the sun**

#### **Another Version from Steve Amerson**

does its successive journeys run,  
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

To him shall endless prayer be made,  
and praises throng to crown his head.  
His name like sweet perfume shall rise  
with every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue  
dwell on his love with sweetest song,  
and infant voices shall proclaim  
their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns:  
the prisoners leap to lose their chains,  
the weary find eternal rest,  
and all who suffer want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring  
the highest honors to our King,  
angels descend with songs again,  
and earth repeat the loud amen.

---

**Deffinbaugh** on the **crowds**: The error of the crowds was at least three-fold.

**First** of all, their acclaim was almost totally based upon and motivated by the miracles which He had performed (Luke 19:37+; John 12:9). It was not His **words** (His teaching and doctrine), but His **works** that motivated many to receive Jesus as Messiah (ED: BUT NOT AS SAVIOR).

**Second**, they failed to grasp the proper priorities for the coming Kingdom. Ultimately, the Messiah would establish a physical, earthly Kingdom, but primarily this Kingdom was based upon a spiritual renewal (See notes on Kingdom in Luke 17:21+). The cheering crowds thought only of the material dimensions of the Kingdom to the exclusion of the spiritual; only the external aspects and not the internal.

**Third**, they were completely in error as to how the Kingdom was to be established. They thought it would be accomplished by military might and revolution, rather than by rejection, suffering, and a humiliating death for the Messiah, Who was to die as the Lamb of God for the sins of His people (cf. Isaiah 52:13–53:12+).

**Why then did Jesus carry through with this mission?** Let me suggest several reasons.

(1) To fulfill prophecy concerning Himself. The gospel accounts stress that this act was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, such as those in Zechariah 9:9 and Malachi 3:1.

(2) To safely enter the city of Jerusalem. It may not seem necessary, but the word was out to disclose the location of Jesus as soon as He appeared (John 11:57). Had Jesus attempted to enter Jerusalem secretly, He could have been quietly disposed of. Entering as He did, the religious leaders could not so much as lift a finger against Him (John 12:19).

(3) To publicly and symbolically give testimony to His identity as Messiah. Neither the crowds nor the religious leaders missed the implications of His triumphal entry.

(4) A proclamation of the kind of Kingdom which He was to establish. Jesus did not march proudly into the city

of Jerusalem as a strutting military figure, nor did He ride on a spirited stallion. He rode on a donkey, symbolic of his humble peace-making assignment. This aspect of the triumphal entry was totally overlooked. Only the later events of the week would make this clear, and then the cheering crowds would turn their backs on the Messiah.

(5) To provoke the opposition and precipitate His own execution on the appointed day. Nothing could have been more of a catalyst to the opposing forces than this bold public proclamation. Now something had to be done, and fast! ([The Triumphal Tragedy Mark 11:1-25](#))

### Mark 11:12 On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry.

- **on:** Mt 21:18-22
- **he was:** Mt 4:2 Lu 4:2 Joh 4:6,7,31-33 John 19:28 Heb 2:17
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:18-22 Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. 19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He \*said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered. 20 Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?" 21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. 22 "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

## JESUS' HUMANITY HE BECAME HUNGRY

**Akin** - This day ends rather uneventful. It is actually quite anti-climatic. Tomorrow will be a different day (Mk 11:12-25). Things will never be the same again!

**Grassmick** points out that "This section has a "sandwich" structure (cf. Mark 3:20–35; 5:21–43; 6:7–31). The account of Jesus' judgment on the fig tree (Mk 11:12–14, 20–26) is divided by the account of His cleansing the temple precincts (Mk 11:15–19)....Like the fig tree, Israel flourished with the "leaves" of ritual religion but lacked the "fruit" of righteousness God demanded. Both episodes (FIG TREE CURSING AND TEMPLE CLEANSING) signify God's impending judgment on Israel for religious hypocrisy (cf. comments on 7:6). Matthew telescoped the incidents into two separate, successive accounts without the precise time intervals Mark noted (Matt. 21:12–17, 18–22). (BKC)

**Utley** adds "This account of the fig tree is split into two sections with the cleansing of the temple placed between to signify that it refers to the judgment of God on the first century Jewish religious system and its leaders (as did the cleansing of the temple)."

**On the next day** - Matthew adds it was "**in the morning**, (probably the fourth watch before 6 a.m) when He was returning to the city." (Mt 21:18)

**Constable** - "The next day was Tuesday, which Hoehner dated as March 31, A.D. 33. Apparently the events of "Palm Sunday" took place on a Monday. The incident that Mark recorded next, beginning in verse 12, occurred as Jesus and His disciples walked from Bethany to Jerusalem on Tuesday morning (Matt. 21:18)."

**When they had left Bethany** - This is the second day of His [Passion Week](#) and extends from Mk 11:12-25. Bethany was about 2 miles from Jerusalem and it was long enough to work up an appetite in Jesus as He was heading back to the Temple.

**He became hungry** ([peinao](#)) - Jesus may have skipped breakfast for he became hungry. As the writer of Hebrews says "He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17+).

**Brian Bell**- A living parable (a good parable sneaks up on u). Our Lord had just come from His triumphal entry, proclaimed as King by the multitude. Jesus knew their shallow adoration would soon turn into cries for His death. He will point out their hypocritical fruitlessness, their lack of faith, and unveil why their prayers were being hindered. Often OT prophets acted out their message when words no longer worked[c19 pottery over head;27 yoke] This whole episode was a sermon in action. Title: Count

Your Figs

**Paul Apple** on **He became hungry** - Humanity of Jesus – limited Himself in taking on human flesh; had normal need for food and water and nourishment; despite having existed from all eternity and having created all things; Breakfast the most important meal of the day!

**Expositors** says that that was surprising, considering that He probably spent the night in the home of hospitable friends, and asks whether the sights in the Temple had killed sleep and appetite, so that He left Bethany without taking food.

---

### **Mark 11:12ff The Barren Fig Tree**

Many detractors of our Lord have pointed with glee to what on the surface seems like a fit of petty anger on Christ's part, spawned by His selfish appetite. In reality, it was probably unrealistic to expect figs at that time of year, a fact which He must have known quite well. Perhaps the key to the whole passage is in the fact that "His disciples heard it."

When we look at the surrounding passages, we see that Christ was using the barren fig tree to teach His disciples something they desperately needed to know. This might be called a living parable. Our Lord had just come from His triumphal entry into the city, having been proclaimed as King by the multitude (Mark 11:7-11), knowing their shallow adoration would soon turn into cries for His death. Leaving the fig tree, he drove the money changers from the temple grounds, having recognized that they were not only exploiting all the Jews who entered, but had taken over the court of the Gentiles, using it as a shortcut through town (Mark 11:16) and a place of business (Mark 11:15), thus denying the possibility of true worship to all, both Jews and Gentiles. The fig tree was an object lesson on barrenness, typifying the Jewish nation's condition in spite of their privileged heritage. This type of hypocritical fruitlessness receives condemnation (Mark 11:20-21), exhibits a lack of faith (Mark 11: 24-26), and hinders our prayers (Mark 11:24-26). - Source unknown ([Bible.org](http://Bible.org))

---

### **Handfuls of Purpose - James Smith - THE BARREN FIG-TREE Mark 11:12–14, 20–22**

"I remember, I remember,  
The fir trees dark and high;  
I used to think their slender spires  
Were close against the sky.  
It was a childish ignorance—  
But now 'tis little joy  
To know I'm farther off from Heaven  
Than when I was a boy."  
—T. Hood.

It is a sorrowful discovery to make that our years of privilege and opportunity, through sin and indifference, are only carrying us farther and farther from God. It was so with the Jewish nation, represented here by the fruitless fig-tree, of which Christ had to say, "I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat." Is the Lord making this lament over your life? Or in answer to His "I thirst," are you offering Him vinegar to drink?

**I. The Search.** "He came if haply he might find any thing thereon" (Mark 11:13).

#### **1. WHO IS THE SEEKER?**

The hungry, saving Son of God (Mark 11:12). Think of how much He had done for the tree; its very existence depended on His goodness. Think of all that had been done for Israel as a nation, and how little He had received at their hands, when "last of all God sent His Son, saying, They will reverence Him when they see Him" (Matt. 21:37). What is He receiving of your life? This same Jesus is seeking from you that which will satisfy His soul.

#### **2. WHERE HE SEEKS.**

From "A fig-tree." He does not seek figs from thistles; He does not look for that which would satisfy His hunger from the thorns and briars of infidels and unbelievers. This tree had the name of a fruit-bearer, but was a deception. If we bear the Name of Christ He looks for the fruits of Christian life. In the fig-tree the fruit appears before the leaves, so that where there are the leaves of profession there ought to be the satisfying fruit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal. 5:22).

**II. The Discovery.** "He found nothing but leaves" (Mark 11:13). There was—

## 1. ABUNDANT PROFESSION.

It had the appearance of abundance of life. There was a great display of activity and attractiveness lent. "One thing thou lackest." So with our lives, we may be full of vigour, and our character morally beautiful and attractive, but if there is no recognition of the claims of Christ we are only as painted Jezebels, clouds without water, barren fig-trees, whited sepulchres. A name to live, but art dead (Rev. 3:1).

## 2. PERFECT DESTITUTION.

"Nothing but leaves." Much for itself, but nothing for Christ. A picture of those who spend all their strength and time merely for their own selfish aggrandisement. Christ's desires are unheeded (Rev. 3:17). But note, that show and profession will not deceive Him. He looks, and takes time to look carefully, beneath the leaves. God judgeth the heart. A show of leaves, fresh and green, may hide your nakedness from the eye of man, but not from the all-searching eye of the searching Son of God. "Search me, O God, and try me" (Psa. 139:23). Adam tried the covering of leaves, but God did not acknowledge such, looking upon him still as one naked. "Nothing but leaves—the Spirit grieves." "By their fruit ye shall know them."

**III. The Judgment.** "The tree which thou cursedst is withered away" (Mark 11:21). "Woe unto you hypocrites, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell" (Matt. 23:33). It was cursed because it was useless. What is the value of a creed, a Church connection, a hope, or a life, if there is naught to satisfy the living, yearning soul of Jesus? Its day of grace is now passed, it was accursed at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 16:22). When He comes it is not to make us fruitful, but to seek fruit. We note that—

### 1. THE CURSE AFFECTED THE ROOTS.

"It was dried up from the roots" (Mark 11:20). With His withering word went forth the power that kept back the sap of the earth from the roots of the tree. He that hath not (fruit), from him shall be taken away even that which he hath (sap). When He withdraws the means of grace immediately the withering process of death and destruction begins. It was so in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot, and will be so when the Church is caught up (2 Thess. 1:7–10). If the talent of privilege is not used it will be taken away. If the sap of God's Word in your heart is not allowed to become fruitful in your life it will be dried up, and your barren life will become like the cursed fig-tree, only fit for the fire.

### 2. THE CURSE AFFECTED THE LEAVES.

"It withered away." The sin of the fig-tree was the sin of omission. Alas, for its beautiful appearance, its plentiful leaves of profession, what can they do for it now? All withered away. Scribes and Pharisees beware! Moral and religious professors take warning! That beautiful, honest, upright, man-pleasing, but Christ-grieving life of yours will one day, when you come face to face with Jesus, wither away, dried up from the root, and nothing on earth, in Heaven, or in Hell, will prevent it (see John 15:1–8).

---

## Cantrell's Snapshots - Fruitless Foliage (Mark 11:12-33)

1. The Tree That Was Cursed (Mark 11:12-14)
  - Christ Saw the Foliage
  - Christ Sought the Fruit
  - Christ Sentenced the Figs
2. The Tables That Were Cleared (Mark 11:15-16)
  - His Previous Investigation (Mark 11:11)
  - His Present Indignation
3. The Truth That Was Convicting (Mark 11:17)
  - His Scriptural Quote
  - His Specific Qualm
4. The Trouble That Was Coming (Mark 11:18)
  - The Forced That Was Needful
  - The Fear That Was Noted
5. The Thoughts That Were Compelling (Mark 11:19-26)
  - The Results of Faith (Mark 11:19-21)
  - The Requirements of Faith (Mark 11:22-24)
  - The Repellants of Faith (Mark 11:25-26)
6. The Trick That Was Countered (Mark 11:27-33)

- The Authority of Jesus Questioned
- The Authority of John Questioned

**Mark 11:13 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.**

- **seeing:** Mt 21:19 Lu 13:6-9
- haply: Ru 2:3 1Sa 6:9 Lu 10:31 12:6,7
- **he found:** Isa 5:7
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Jeremiah 8:13 "I will surely snatch them away," declares the LORD; "There will be no grapes on the vine And no figs on the fig tree, And the leaf will wither; And what I have given them will pass away."

Jesus Examines a Leafy Fig Tree

## THE PARABLE OF THE "HYPOCRITICAL" FIG TREE

**R C Sproul** - The biblical accounts of Jesus' cursing of the fig tree have vexed scholars for centuries. For one thing, this perplexing narrative records for us the only miracle in the New Testament that involves destruction. Furthermore, on the surface, it seems that Jesus overreacted to this innocent fig tree for not bearing fruit when it was not the season for figs. The late Bertrand Russell, who wrote an essay titled "Why I Am Not a Christian," cited this narrative as one of his reasons for repudiating Christianity. He said this incident displays Jesus as a man who expressed vindictive fury to an innocent plant, manifesting behavior that was not that of a righteous man, let alone the Son of God. Even Christian scholars who are sanguine in their evaluation of Jesus are perplexed by this story. Some have said that this incident represents a waste of supernatural power.

**Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf** - Recall that the name of Bethphage means "house of figs." This supports that this occurred in Spring which coincides with the fact that the Passover is soon to be celebrated and the Passover Lamb was now arriving!

The prophets often spoke of Israel by the symbol of a fig tree (Jer 8:13; 29:17; Hos 9:10, 16; Joel 1:7; Micah 7:1-6+).

**He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it** - Small, edible buds should have been present, because they generally appear in March even before the fig tree is in leaf. As Sproul says "The test of whether one could expect figs from a fig tree was not the time of year but whether the foliage of the tree was in full bloom."

**And when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs** - So Jesus did not find the small edible figlets so to speak which would become full grown figs later in the season (usually no earlier than June). And so it was clear this fig tree would never bear ripe figs.

**Paul Apple** - Jesus saw an opportunity to teach His disciples an important truth using this tree as an object lesson. Being a prophet, Jesus performed a symbolic act (cf. Isa. 20:1-6; Jer. 13:1-11; 19:1-13; Ezek. 4:1-15). He cursed the tree to teach them the lesson, not because it failed to produce fruit. The tree was a good illustration of the large unbelieving element within the nation of Israel. God had looked to that generation of Israelites for spiritual fruit, as Jesus had hoped to find physical fruit on the fig tree (Matt. 3:8; cf. Jer. 8:13; Hos. 9:10; Mic. 7:1; Nah. 3:12; Zech. 10:2). Israel's outward display of religious vitality was impressive, like the leaves on the tree, but it bore no spiritual fruit of righteousness. It was hypocritical (7:6; 11:15-19, 27-12:40).

The great majority of persons who have any sort of religion at all bear leaves, but they produce no fruit.

--- Charles Spurgeon

**Akin** - Though it is not yet —the season for figs|| , the presence of the leaves would indicate this tree would have fruit on it, if not full figs, perhaps, and more likely, [paggim](#), small green figs (knops). Though not all that tasty, they were edible and could relieve His hunger. However, the tree was barren. It bore no fruit. Its leaves promised one thing but it had not produced. It was a *hypocritical* fig tree. The leaves, the outward appearance, said —come here I have fruit that will satisfy and meet your needs.|| However, when you come you realize you have been deceived. It was a show with no substance. Sadly this is what Israel had become, especially the Temple and its religious leaders (the Sanhedrin) who oversaw its operation. Here was a people that gave an outward and visible

appearance of great spirituality and devotion to God but on close inspection was exposed a hypocrite. Gentiles were denied the opportunity to come close to God being restricted to the outer court and subjected to a religious carnival. The poor were exploited by money-changers and merchants. The temple culture had grown big and impressive but it was all a sham. Empty religiosity was there actual condition, and Jesus cursed them for it (v. 14). There was no gospel and no God to be found for those needing to find salvation. Once a beacon of light, it was now only a faint flicker that was about to be extinguished.

## **TWO OBJECT LESSONS (ACTS OF JUDGMENT)**

- Fig Tree: boasts of its leaves – but no fruit
- Temple: showy and impressive – but no genuine worship

---

## **NOTHING BUT LEAVES Mark 11:13 - James Smith in Handfuls of Purpose**

### **Strange.**

1. But why curse the fig tree for not bearing figs, seeing it was not time for the fruit? How strange!
2. It is our Lord's only destructive act.

### **Circumstance.**

1. Jesus had spent His last Sabbath on earth with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus at Bethany.
2. Though He had just left that hospitable home, He became hungry—evidence of the reality of His manhood.
3. Though passing many fig trees by the wayside, only one particularly attracted His attention though “afar off.” He came expecting figs and found nothing but leaves. Why expect figs though it was not the time for figs?

### **CLUE.**

1. The fig tree produces fruit first and leaf afterwards, and in some cases the leaves accompany, but do not precede the fruit.
2. This fig tree was false and untruthful; it made a loud profession by its leaf, but there was no possession.

**TWO LESSONS.** “And Jesus answered” (14): He heard what the fig tree said.

1. Jesus draws a lesson on the wonderful power of the prayer of faith.
2. Indirectly there is given to professing Christians a solemn warning on the peril of mere profession without possession.

### **DIRECT.**

1. The direct application of the parable is to the Jewish nation.
2. The heathen nations of that time were barren enough, but they were not professors as Israel were.
3. A curse has rested on Israel for now 19 centuries.
4. But that fig tree will yet be restored to fruit and blessing.

### **ALPINE CLIMBERS.**

1. It is said that skilled Alpine climbers can tell their altitude by the kind of vegetation they see growing around them.
2. Skilled spiritual guides can tell a person's spiritual plane by the graces to be observed in that life.
3. Worldly habits and outlook proclaim a life lived on the low altitude of the world.

### **WHY LEAVES ONLY IS CONSIDERED SERIOUS.**

1. Misrepresent our Christian faith. For true religion does not consist in mere church or meeting attendance.
2. Such hinder seekers.
  - a. The blessed man in Psalm 1 is the one who stands not in the way of sinners.
  - b. Mere professors have always been the stumbling-block.

### **WHY NO FRUIT?**

1. No life, in some cases, though not in this, as leaf proves.
2. No nourishment—poorness of soil.
3. No concentration. Expending strength in producing wood and not fruit. Wasteful expenditure of energy.
4. No shelter. Exposed to the cutting east winds. Do you shelter in Him?



5. No careful scrutiny. Take time to be holy.
6. Uncongenial atmosphere. In some towns plum trees will not grow, nor some kinds of apple trees, because they are very sensitive to soot-laden atmosphere. (Cinema and theatre attenders.)

#### APPLICATION.

1. Jesus hungers for fruitfulness, for goodness and usefulness. Shall we not seek to satisfy Him?
2. Remember, He will come for the last time, and then the curse will fall. The date of this miracle has an important bearing on its meaning and purpose. It occurred on the first week day morning of the last week of Christ's ministry.

#### A FATHER'S PRAYER.

A little boy knelt down at his father's knee to say his bedtime prayers. After he had repeated his usual ones, the father suggested offering some other. After some hesitation, the wee one said: "Dear Jesus, when I grow up, make me big and strong like daddy." The words sank deep into the father's heart for he had gone astray, and very late that night, hours after, he prayed, "My Father, now that I am grown up, make me pure and sweet like my boy." And his prayer was answered.

---

**Warren Wiersbe** - Seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. MARK 11:13

When a fig tree has leaves, it's a sign that there are also figs, for the large leaves protect the fruit; but in this case, no figs had been produced at all. Jesus turned this event into an "action sermon" to teach some important lessons to his disciples and to us.

The first lesson has to do with the nation of Israel and the importance of bearing fruit. The Old Testament prophets used the fig tree and the vine as symbols of the nation of Israel. Jeremiah compared the sinful nation to rotten figs

(Jer. 29:17), and Hosea wrote that, even though Israel was like "the firstfruits of the fig tree," their roots had dried up and they bore no fruit (Hos. 9:10, 16). During Joel's time, an invasion of locusts was ruining the nation, what God called "My vine" and "My fig tree" (Joel 1:7). The most common description of prosperity in Israel was to dwell under one's fig tree in peace and plenty (1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4). Prior to this event, Jesus had wept over the city of Jerusalem because Israel had an outward show of "religion" but had produced no fruit. Their worship was like this fig tree—nothing but leaves. Jesus told the hypocritical religious leaders, "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Matt. 21:43). I believe that "nation" is the church (1 Pet. 2:9), but are we bearing fruit today, or have our roots dried up, leaving us nothing but leaves?

Our Lord's second lesson has to do with believing prayer. The disciples heard him curse the fig tree, and the next morning as they walked to Jerusalem from Bethany, they saw that the tree had withered from the roots. Our Lord's response was, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). He told them that their faith could move mountains, a vivid way of saying, "Faith accomplishes the impossible." Please keep in mind that when Jesus was ministering on earth, he lived by faith and not by his miraculous power. He prayed, he depended on the Holy Spirit, and he claimed the promises of God, just as we must do. I can never forget what Vance Havner said in a chapel message at seminary based on Hebrews 11:24–29, "Moses saw the invisible, Moses chose the imperishable, and Moses did the impossible." And so may we! During our years of ministry, my wife and I have seen God do great things because of the believing prayers of God's people. Is the church today praying in faith and expecting God to do great things?

The third lesson links with the second: as we pray, we must be honest with God. If there is anything in our hearts against anyone, our Father wants us to get that matter settled so he can answer our prayers. The religious leaders in Jerusalem were plotting to kill Jesus, yet they went right on in their religious duties with murder in their hearts! Jesus dealt with the topic of sin in the heart in Matthew 5:21–30, and we need to remember what he said. We must ask for forgiveness and then make things right with others, if we expect God to answer prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Ps. 66:18). "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Prov. 4:23 TNIV).

Jesus is still seeking fruit. He has given us all that we need to have honest hearts and fruitful lives. Are we abiding in him, bearing fruit and moving mountains?

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. John 15:4 (NT Words for Today)

---

**REALITY! J.C. Ryle, 1878** (Note this is only an excerpt - [click here for the full article](#)).

- "Reprobate silver." Jeremiah 6:30

- "Nothing but leaves." Mark 11:13
- "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue — but in deed and in truth!" 1 John 3:18.
- "You have a name that you live — and are dead!" Revelation 3:1

If we profess to have any religion at all, let us take care that it is real. I say it emphatically, and I repeat the saying: Let us mind that our religion is real.

What do I mean when I use the word "real." I mean that which is genuine, and sincere, and honest, and thorough. I mean that which is not base, and hollow, and formal, and false, and counterfeit, and sham, and nominal. "Real" religion is not mere show, and pretense, and skin-deep feeling, and temporary profession, and outside work. It is something inward, solid, substantial, intrinsic, living, lasting. We know the difference between base coin and good money, between solid gold and tinsel, between plated metal and silver, between real stone and plaster imitation. Let us think of these things as we consider the subject of this paper. What is the character of our religion? Is it real? It may be weak, and feeble, and mingled with many infirmities. That is not the point before us today. Is our religion real? Is it true?

The times in which we live demand attention to the subject. A lack of reality is a striking feature of a vast amount of religion in the present day. Scientists have sometimes told us that the world has passed through different states or conditions. We have had a golden age, and a silver age, a brazen age, and an iron age. How far this is true, I do not stop to inquire. But I fear there is little doubt as to the character of the age in which we live. It is universally an age of base metal and alloy.

If we measure the religion of the age by its apparent quantity — there is much of it. But if we measure it by its quality — there is very little indeed. On every side we want MORE REALITY.

I ask your attention, while I try to bring home to your consciences the question of this paper. There are two things which I propose to do:

I. In the first place, I will show the importance of reality in religion.

II. In the second place, I will supply some tests by which we may prove whether our own religion is real. [Click here for the full article](#).

### Mark 11:14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

- No: Mk 11:20,21 Isa 5:5,6 Mt 3:10 7:19 12:33-35 21:19,33,44 Joh 15:6 De 6:4-8 11:26-31 2Pe 2:20 Rev 22:11
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:19-22 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He \*said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered. 20 Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?" 21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. 22 "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

## JESUS CURSES THE FIG TREE

Some like Bertrand Russell took offense at this act and in his book *Why I Am Not a Christian* accused Jesus of "vindictive fury" and wrote of our Lord's character "I cannot myself feel that either in the matter of wisdom or in the matter of virtue Christ stands quite as high as some other people known to history." I think Russell may have an entirely different opinion now that he is in Hades!

**NET Note** - The incident of the cursing of the fig tree occurs before he enters the temple for a third time (Mark 11:27ff) and is questioned at length by the religious leaders (Mark 11:27–12:40). It appears that Mark records the incident as a portent of what is going to happen to the leadership in Jerusalem who were supposed to have borne spiritual fruit but have been found by Messiah at his coming to be barren. The fact that the nation as a whole is indicted is made explicit in Mark 13:1–37 where Jesus speaks of Jerusalem's destruction and His second coming.

**Akin** writes "Jesus, however, was not acting like a spoiled brat who did not get His way. There is no anger. There is no malice. This

is no out of control burst of a temper tantrum. It is, as we will see, an object lesson, an acted out parable of our Lord's judgment on Israel and on those who claim to be one thing but are actually another, who put on a show but do not produce. In the immediate context it is a curse on the temple and the nation of Israel. By application it could be a curse on you and me."

**He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!"** - In Mark 11:21 Peter refers to this as **acurse** in his query of Jesus.

**Grassmick** - a dramatic prophetic sign of God's impending judgment on Israel. (BKC)

**Akin** applies this truth - There is a point without a doubt. Fruitlessness now may result in fruitlessness forever. Lose your usefulness for Jesus and He may curse you and move on! After all, it is not He who needs us. It is we who desperately need Him. We need Him to save us. We need Him to make us useful and fruitful. Turn our backs on Him and His gospel, turn His church into a religious club of idolatry, hypocrisy and unfruitfulness and you will receive not His blessing but His curse. Protest all you want about how good you are. Nationalism, regionalism and ethnocentrism are an abomination in His eyes. And mark my words; He sees it, He sees it all. His eyes which are a flame of fire (Rev. 19:12) will expose you for who and what you really are.

**And His disciples were listening** - So they were eyewitnesses.

**Brian Bell** - Don't settle for shiny leaves. And, don't try to cover your spiritual nakedness with religious Fig Leaves. Looking for fruit on the fig tree represents what Jesus was looking for in the Temple, & what Jesus is looking for in your Temple. Count Your Figs!

---

### Why Was the Fig Tree Cursed?

This incident is related by Mark and, in a more compressed form, by Matthew. According to Mark, Jesus and his disciples spent the night following his entry into Jerusalem in Bethany. Next morning they returned to Jerusalem. On the way he felt hungry, and "seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs." Then Jesus cursed the tree: "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." They continued on their way into Jerusalem, where that day he cleansed the temple; in the evening they returned to Bethany. Next morning, as they passed the same place, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!" (Mk 11:20-21).

Was it not unreasonable to curse the tree for being fruitless when, as Mark expressly says, "it was not the season for figs"? The problem is most satisfactorily cleared up in a discussion called "The Barren Fig Tree" published many years ago by W. M. Christie, a Church of Scotland minister in Palestine under the British mandatory regime. He pointed out first the time of year at which the incident is said to have occurred (if, as is probable, Jesus was crucified on April 6th, A.D. 30, the incident occurred during the first days of April). "Now," wrote Christie, "the facts connected with the fig tree are these. Toward the end of March the leaves begin to appear, and in about a week the foliage coating is complete. Coincident with [this], and sometimes even before, there appears quite a crop of small knobs, not the real figs, but a kind of early forerunner. They grow to the size of green almonds, in which condition they are eaten by peasants and others when hungry. When they come to their own indefinite maturity they drop off." These precursors of the true fig are called taqsh in Palestinian Arabic. Their appearance is a harbinger of the fully formed appearance of the true fig some six weeks later. So, as Mark says, the time for figs had not yet come. But if the leaves appear without any taqsh, that is a sign that there will be no figs. Since Jesus found "nothing but leaves"—leaves without any taqsh—he knew that "it was an absolutely hopeless, fruitless fig tree" and said as much.

But if that is the true explanation of his words, why should anyone trouble to record the incident as though it had some special significance? Because it did have some special significance. As recorded by Mark, it is an acted parable with the same lesson as the spoken parable of the fruitless fig tree in Luke 13:6-9. In that spoken parable a landowner came three years in succession expecting fruit from a fig tree on his property, and when year by year it proved to be fruitless, he told the man in charge of his vineyard to cut it down because it was using up the ground to no good purpose. In both the acted parable and the spoken parable it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the fig tree represents the city of Jerusalem, unresponsive to Jesus as he came to it with the message of God, and thereby incurring destruction. Elsewhere Luke records how Jesus wept over the city's blindness to its true well-being and foretold its ruin "because you did not know the time of your visitation" (Lk 19:41-44 RSV). It is because the incident of the cursing of the fig tree was seen to convey the same lesson that Mark, followed by Matthew, recorded it. (Walter Kaiser, et al - Hard Sayings of the Bible)

**Mark 11:15 Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive 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;**

■ **and He:** Mt 21:12-16 Lu 19:45 Joh 2:13-17

- the tables: De 14:25,26
- Mark 11 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

John 2:13-17+ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 15And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; 16and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." 17His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."

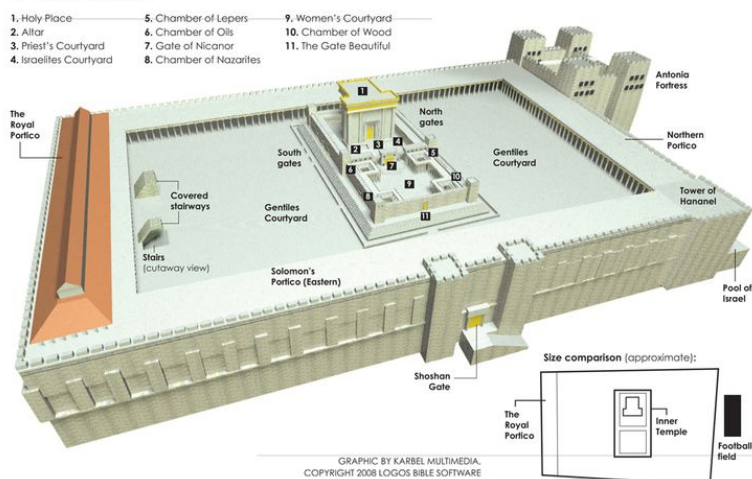
Matthew 21:12-16 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves (peristera - young doves or pigeons - offering allowed for those who were extremely poor - cf Lk 2:24+). 13 And He \*said to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER'; but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN." 14 And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and **the children who were shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David,"** they became indignant 16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" And Jesus \*said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'OUT OF THE MOUTH OF INFANTS AND NURSING BABIES YOU HAVE PREPARED PRAISE FOR YOURSELF'?"

**Comment on the children who were shouting in the temple-** : The children knew the Scriptures better than the religious leaders, because they acknowledged Jesus as the "**Son of David**" (cf Bartimaeus the Blind Beggar in Lk 18:38-39+), the only place in Luke where someone uses this clear Messianic title. **The Pharisees did not want to see Jesus acknowledged as the Messiah!** How ironic that only those who were **little children** (and like little children Lk 18:16-17+) and the one who was **physically blind** could "see" Jesus' true identity as the promised Messiah!

Luke 19:45-47+ Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, 46 saying to them, "It is written, 'AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN." 47 And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him,

## Herod's Temple

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple wasn't completed until approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



(Copyright 2014 Faithlife / Logos Bible Software)

**PLACE FOR PRAYING HAD BECOME  
A PLACE FOR PREYING AND PAYING**

**Akin** - On September 6, 1520, Martin Luther wrote in An Open Letter to Pope Leo X, —The Roman church, once the holiest of all, has become the most licentious den of thieves, the most shameless of all brothels, the kingdom of sin, death and hell. It is so bad that even Antichrist himself, if he should come, could think of nothing to add to its wickedness|| (Gartand, NIVAC, 446).

**Then they came to Jerusalem** - There is not record of a "triumphal" welcome.

**And He entered the Temple**- Jesus entered the temple which describes the whole Temple complex. Barclay notes that "The Temple area covered the top of Mount Zion and was about thirty acres in extent. It was surrounded by great walls which varied on each side, 1,300 to 1,000 feet in length. There was a wide outer space called the Court of the Gentiles. Into it anyone, Jew or Gentile, might come. At the inner edge of the Court of the Gentiles was a low wall with tablets set into it which said that if a Gentile passed that point the penalty was death. The next court was called the Court of the Women. It was so called because unless women had come actually to offer sacrifice they might not proceed further. Next was the Court of the Israelites. In it the congregation gathered on great occasions, and from it the offerings were handed by the worshippers to the priests. The inmost court was the Court of the Priests. The other important word is naos, which means the Temple proper, and it was in the Court of the Priests that the Temple stood. The whole area, including all the different Courts, was the sacred precincts (hieron). The special building within the Court of the Priests was the Temple (naos). This incident took place in the Court of the Gentiles. Bit by bit the Court of the Gentiles had become almost entirely secularized. It had been meant to be a place of prayer and preparation, but there was in the time of Jesus a commercialized atmosphere of buying and selling which made prayer and meditation impossible. What made it worse was that the business which went on there was sheer exploitation of the pilgrims." ([Mark 11 Commentary](#))

Jesus entering **the Temple** is fascinating. Here is the King of Glory entered into the very place from which His Glory had departed over 500 years earlier, just prior to the destruction of the First (Solomon's) Temple in 586 BC by the Babylonians and King Nebuchadnezzar ([See Table depicting His progressive departure from the Temple](#); [See Scriptural explanation of this stepwise departure](#)). Recall that John described Jesus as "**the Word**" (John 1:1<sup>±</sup> - His Divinity) Who "became flesh (His Humanity), and dwelt among us, and we beheld **His glory, glory** as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14<sup>±</sup>) So for a brief moment in time, the Glory of the LORD had returned to His Holy Habitation, the Temple! But just as in Ezekiel's day when there was corruption and idolatry and failure to recognize Jehovah which led to His departure, so too again religious corruption and rejection will lead to His departure. But praise God, His departure from the Temple is not permanent for He promised He would return (Hebrews 9:27-28<sup>±</sup>) Matthew says that at Messiah's Second Advent "then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and **great glory**." (Mt 24:30<sup>±</sup>). In the meantime, the King is delaying His return Peter recording that "The Lord is not slow about His promise (TO RETURN), as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9<sup>±</sup>) and as the New Living Translation puts it "And remember, the Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. Th (2Pe 3:15NLT<sup>±</sup>)



Eastern Gate Sealed Shut

Remember on His entry into the city the crowds have (in effect) crowned Jesus as **King of the Jews**, so His entrance into the Temple grounds will constitute His first "official act" as it were as their King. In truth from Mark 11:11-12 this event actually occurs the day after the Triumphal Entry. You can imagine the anticipation of the Jews as they watched Him enter the Temple, undoubtedly expecting their conquering King to head straight for the [Antonia Fortress](#) (depicted in the right upper corner of the diagram above) which housed the Roman soldiers. Instead, to their shock and dismay, He directly confronts the religious corruption taking place in the Court of the Gentiles! This reminds me of Peter's warning that "it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17). Where would Jesus go first if He came to America? To Washington? To Wall Street? No, He would go directly to the churches that claim His Name!

**Wuest** - Expositors says: "The state of things Jesus saw in the temple yesterday has been in His mind ever since (Mk 11:11) through the night watches in Bethany; in the morning, killing appetite; on the way, the key to His enigmatical behavior towards the fig tree." (Mk 11:12-14) Swete says: "He began the day's work by ejecting the traffickers, making no distinction between sellers and buyers. The market was within the precinct of the Temple, and had already attracted the attention of Jesus at the first Passover of His ministry (John 2:14+). It was a recognized institution, under the protection of the chief priests (Most of whom were Sadducees - [see note](#)), and known in Rabbinical writings. The sales were limited to the Temple requisites, victims for the sacrifices, and the wine, oil, salt, etc., used in the ritual." As to our Lord prohibiting any from carrying a vessel through the Temple (Mk 11:16), the explanation is as follows: Persons carrying goods or implements, used the Temple as a short-cut when going between the city



and the Mount of Olives. This had been forbidden by the Jewish authorities at one time, but the order was not being enforced. The Greek or Roman money which the Passover visitors from Gentile countries brought with them was changed into Jewish half-shekels, so that the Jew could pay his Temple-tax. A large profit was made in this way. To have their tables overturned and their money thrown all over the floor on the eve of the Passover, was to deal their business a serious blow at a time when the money traffic was at its height. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Kistemaker** - What a sorry spectacle greets His eyes, ears, and even nostrils (ED: I WAS RAISED ON A FARM AND CAN ATTEST TO THE AROMA THAT MUST HAVE ARISEN BECAUSE OF THE MANY ANIMALS IN THE COURT OF THE GENTILES)! He notices that the court is being desecrated. It resembles a market place. (Ibid)

Note the Temple diagram above and locate the "**Shushan Gate**" (misspelled in diagram) which is another name for what is known as the **Eastern Gate**. This is very likely the gate through which Jesus entered into the Temple grounds. Note that the first area He would encounter is the relatively large [Court of the Gentiles](#) where basically anyone was allowed to go. It was in the Court of the Gentiles that the Money changers had set up shop.

**The Shushan Gate - The Eastern Gate**, (aka the "Beautiful Gate") one of the five gates of the Temple Mount. The source of the name Shushan: The Jews that returned from the Babylonian/Persian exile etched the image of the city of Shushan (the Persian capitol) on the gate - to signify their appreciation to the Persian kingdom that was instrumental in building the Second Temple. A medieval Jewish tradition "foretells" (aka "prophesies") that the prophet Elijah will lead the Mashiach (Messiah) into the Temple grounds through this Shushan Gateway. Elijah is a Kohain (Priest) and a Kohain may not enter a cemetery. Many centuries ago, some scheming Muslims placed an Arab cemetery along the Eastern Wall to foil Messiah's entrance. The tragedy is that the Messiah entered the Temple (most likely) through the Eastern Gate (at that time named the Sushan Gate) and the Jews failed to recognize the time of His **visitation!**

[Wikipedia on the Court of the Gentiles](#) - This area was primarily a bazaar, with vendors selling souvenirs, sacrificial animals, food, as well as currency changers, exchanging Roman for Tyrian money because the Jews were not allowed to coin their own money and they viewed Roman currency as an abomination to the Lord,[19] as also mentioned in the New Testament account of Jesus and the Money Changers when Jerusalem was packed with Jews who had come for Passover, perhaps numbering 300,000 to 400,000 pilgrims.[20][21] Guides that provided tours of the premises were also available. Jewish males had the unique opportunity to be shown inside the temple itself.

**The Golden Gate (Eastern Gate)** - It is interesting that this gate is the only one of the eight gates in Jerusalem that is sealed. The Arabs believe that since the Jews expect that Messiah would come through this gate (Sha'ar harachamim) they would try to prevent any possibility of His return. [The East gate was walled up by it's Muslim conquerors](#) (the Ottoman Turks) with great stones in 1530 A.D. and a cemetery was planted in front of it thinking that the Jewish Messiah could not set foot in a cemetery and therefore would not be able to come. Many believe this was done to prevent the entrance of the Jewish Messiah through that gate as was foretold by known Old Testament prophecies. (See full [discussion of the Golden Gate = Eastern Gate](#)).



Painting by A N Mironov

and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple- Drive out is [ekbállō](#) the same verb Mark uses repeatedly of Jesus casting out demons (Mk 1:34, 39+, etc). Is that just coincidence? Perhaps but the dealers were undoubtedly spurred on by demonic fiery missiles! Keep in mind the Temple was to have been a place of worship! The painting above by A N Mironov shows Christ with a "scourge of cords" which is specifically described **only** in His first cleansing of the Temple at Passover in John 2:13-16+. **Robertson** quips "It is amazing how short a time the work of reformers lasts!" (in this case less than 3 years after the first cleansing) It is intriguing that Jesus began His ministry cleaning out the corruption in the Temple complex and three years later ended His ministry carrying out the same cleansing! Is there a message here for us in America where so many are



using their version of "Christianity" to make money and receive acclaim from men? (That's a rhetorical question!) For context let's look at His first Temple cleansing...

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the **money changers** ([2773](#) - [kermatistes](#) = only here = dealer in small money) seated at their tables. 15 And He made a **scourge of cords** (NOT DESCRIBED AT HIS SECOND CLEANSING), and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the **money changers** ([2855](#) - [kollubistes](#)) and **overturned** ([anatrepo](#)) **their tables**; (STOP FOR A MOMENT AND IMAGINE GENTLE JESUS FLIPPING OVER TABLES!) 16 and to those who were selling the doves (CHARGING POOREST OF POOR EXORBITANT RATES! READ Pr 22:22-23) He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." (John 2:13-16+)

It is noteworthy that the two Temple cleansings are the only acts of "holy violence" recorded of the Lord Jesus. In this case Jesus revealed Himself as Lord of the temple (cf. Mt. 12:6).

**Lawrence Richards** comments "Herod the Great dedicated 40 years and untold wealth to beautify the Jerusalem temple. That temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world, and drew thousands of Gentile as well as Jewish visitors to Judea. Yet Christ's anger that its courts had become a "den of robbers" reminds us that the true significance of any house of worship is not found in how it looks but in what happens there."

**Mark Akin** - Jesus saw extortion, bribery, greed and dishonesty at every turn in this religious bazaar and He had enough. He got physical in righteous rage and indignation and He cleaned house! His holy wrath burned with passion and purity as He restored, at least for a moment, the temple of God to its rightful purpose. Here is God's greatest High Priest exercising His rightful authority over His temple.

**Bell** quips "This seemed to be the **County Fair** & the **Stock Exchange** all rolled into one."

**and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves**- Only Mark and Matthew record the description that He "overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves." The annual tribute of each Jew to the Temple coffers was a [half-shekel](#) (Ex 30:13). The money changers in the court of the Gentiles exchange the Jewish money for Greek and Roman coins called drachmé ([1406](#)), [drachma](#), and statér ([4715](#)), the latter being a coin equivalent to four drachma.

The doves (or pigeons) were the sacrificial animal for the poor, so that these ruthless moneychangers were even mercilessly bilking the poorest people. Some estimate the mark up was 16 times the normal price so that 2 pigeons which normally sold say for \$0.25 would now cost the impoverished person \$4.00.

Barclay said, "**Outside** doves cost as little as 3 ½ pence a pair, **inside** they were as much as 75 pence a pair."

**Hiebert** - every male Jew twenty years or over was required to pay yearly a half shekel toward the cost of the religious services in the temple. Foreign coins with their idolatrous images were refused for this purpose. The money-changers were in the temple court to change the Greek and Roman coins of the pilgrims into the Jewish or Tyrian coinage which alone could be used for the payment.

We call this the cleansing of the temple, which it is, but it also a condemnation of the Temple. In short, it is Jesus' critique of all false religion which He hates!

It is surprising that all four Gospels record Jesus' cleansing and yet none have any hint of resistance by the authorities to actually attempt to prevent Him from cleansing the Court of the Gentiles. Is this a manifestation of supernatural power/intervention? We simply don't know, but remember that this area was up to 10 football fields in size and it seems to be a genuine miracle that one Man could accomplish thorough cleansing of such a huge area filled with animals and [riff-raff](#)! Of course, this is not just any man but is the God-Man and He is filled with righteous anger and with the Holy Spirit! One writer has even suggested that some of the prophetically knowledgeable Jews might have seen His actions as fulfillment of Malachi 3:1-3+ which says "

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And **the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His Temple**; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. 2 "But **who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.** 3 "He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness"

**John MacArthur** gives a vivid description of the corrupt, horrific state of the Court of the Gentiles...

The Court of the Gentiles had been turned into basically a business center. And the business was selling animals needed for the sacrifices (twice daily and then the Passover). One Passover record indicates 260,000 lambs were slain, so you can just imagine how many animals would have been in the courtyard! And you had to buy other necessities for offerings and sacrifices. Then there were [moneychangers](#). All of this was basically called the Bazaar of Annas (**ED: [SEE ALFRED EDERSHEIM](#)** = "The Temple-market and the *Bazaars of the sons of Annas* are identical"). Annas and Caiaphas both being high priests ran the operation and became filthy rich selling franchises to people who sold the animals and changed the money and sold the oil and the other things that were used. They sold these franchises for very high prices and then skimmed off a huge percentage of the profit of shop owners, so that the Court of the Gentiles was just jammed with these shops. Lightfoot writes there was always a constant market in the Temple in that place (THE COURT OF THE GENTILES)....One might ask, "Well why don't they bring their own animals?" They should and they could choose the best one in the flock without spot and without blemish. But if you brought your own animal, it was risky because every animal that was sacrificed had to pass priestly inspection. And it was to the benefit of the priests to reject your animal because when they rejected your animal, you had to buy their animal. And you would be forced to do that at an exorbitant price, and a huge percentage would be skimmed off and paid to the chief priests. And if they rejected your animal, some records say you would have to pay ten times the fair price. This is robbery and extortion by the priests. The noise, the filth, the stench of all the animals, the chaos of a stockyard in the Temple of God was nauseating to Christ – the corruption, the robbery, the thievery, by people who had no conscience about bilking the poor. And there were sellers of doves and pigeons because there were some people so poor they could not afford a lamb, so according to Leviticus 12:6,8 the poor people could offer two doves. Doves would be worthy in today's money about a dime each but they would cost about \$10 each there. The travesty, the prostitution, the perversion, the corruption was just vile and blatant. Then there were the moneychangers, *kollubos* is the word that is a part of the word "moneychangers." It means "small coins." Every Jew had to pay a half-shekel temple tax near the Passover time. A month before, you could pay it locally, but if you got to Jerusalem and you had not paid it, you had to pay it in the Temple, and you had to pay it with a certain required coinage. And if you did not have the exact amount, then you had to change your money, and they charged you 25% to change money. The whole "Bazaar of Annas" was vile and had become a hangout for every crook, charlatan, conman of all sorts plying their trade. That is where Jesus went. Religion was corrupt. That is where He gave His attention. He was repulsed by what He saw and smelled and heard. Jesus was on His turf. "My house," He says in Lk 19:46 quoting from Isaiah 56:7, "You have brought your corruption into My house."...He goes to defend God and God's house against the blasphemers. ([Sermon](#))

**James Edwards:** The enormity of the temple industry [during Passover] may be further appreciated by a comment from Josephus (War 6.422-27) that in A.D. 66, the year the temple was completed, 255,600 lambs were sacrificed for Passover!

**The money changers:** Every male Jew had to pay a Temple tax every year of half a shekel, equal to nearly two days' pay for a working man. A month before the Passover, booths were set up in all the towns and villages and it could be paid there; but by far the greater part was actually paid by the pilgrims in Jerusalem when they came to the Passover Feast. In Palestine all kinds of currencies were in circulation, and, for ordinary purposes, they were all--Greek, Roman Tyrian, Syrian, Egyptian--equally valid. But this tax had to be paid either in exact half shekels of the sanctuary or in ordinary Galilaeen shekels. That is where the money changers came in. To change a coin of exact value they charged one maah, which was equal to 1 pence. If a larger coin was tendered a charge of one maah was made for the requisite half shekel and of another maah for the giving of change. It has been computed that these money changers made a profit of between 28,000 and 9,000 British pounds per annum. The sellers of animals: Almost every visit to the Temple involved sacrifice. Victims could be bought outside at reasonable prices; but the Temple authorities had appointed inspectors, for a victim must be without spot or blemish. It was, therefore, far safer to buy victims from the booths officially set up in the Temple. But there were times when a pair of doves would cost as much as 75 pence inside the Temple and considerably less than 5 pence outside. Again it was a deliberately planned victimization of the poor pilgrims, nothing more or less than legalized robbery. Worse, these Temple shops were known as the Booths of Annas and were the property of the family of the High Priest. That is why Jesus was brought first before Annas when he was arrested ([John 18:13](#)). Annas was delighted to gloat over this man who had struck such a blow at his evil monopoly. Jesus cleansed the Temple with such violence because its traffic was being used to exploit helpless men and women. It was not simply that the buying and selling interfered with the dignity and solemnity of worship; it was that the very worship of the house of God was being used to exploit the worshippers.

Proverbs 11:1 A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight.

**Related Resource:**

- [What is the significance of the Eastern Gate of Jerusalem?](#)
- [Was Jesus ever angry?](#)
- [How many times did Jesus cleanse the temple? Why did He cleanse the temple?](#)
- [What does it mean that the house of prayer had been turned into a den of thieves?](#)
- [Alfred Edersheim - The Cleansing of the Temple](#) (based on [John 2:13-15](#))

**Question 9 Why was Jesus so angry when He drove the money changers out of the temple? What was so wrong about what they were doing** (Matthew 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–17; Luke 19:45–46; John 2:12–17)?

In light of today's church, where we can buy everything from handcrafts to concert tickets in the lobby following the morning service, it does seem a bit excessive. But Jesus wasn't dealing with anything as harmless as the women's circle raising money to redecorate the nursery.

For over a century the temple high priest had been a political appointee of the ruling classes. The position was a plum that could be, and was, bought by the highest bidder or plucked by the most politically powerful. The rich and powerful didn't vie for the position out of piety. Generally, what the rich and powerful want more than anything else is more riches and more power. The high priesthood offered an effective means to both.

Every Jewish man over the age of twenty was expected to contribute half a shekel every year to the temple. The tax could only be paid in silver coins from Tyre. Changing the coinage of the world for the acceptable coin of the temple was one of the functions of the temple money changers.

Since Jesus himself paid the temple tax, and since the money changers served the useful purpose of making it possible for others to pay theirs as well, the existence of money changers in the outer court of the temple couldn't have been what excited His wrath.

Another wrinkle may play a part here. The Law of God required that the animals offered for sacrifice be without spot or blemish. Whether people were offering the poor person's sacrifice of a sparrow or the rich person's sacrifice of a bullock, the priests had to inspect and approve the animal.

The high priests wanted to insure a steady flow of income from their positions, so what better way than to provide approved sacrificial animals bearing the high priest's seal of approval.

Since Tyrian silver coins were the official money of the temple, purchases from this convenient source would have to be made with the assistance of the money changers. Yet even this would not account for Jesus' behavior, since the temple was merely providing a service to make the prescribed worship more convenient.

But what if the priests set the price sky high? Many of the people coming to make a sacrifice were pilgrims from far away or city dwellers who had no livestock of their own to bring. So the priests had a captive audience and could charge as much as they wanted. The Mishna, an ancient Jewish holy book that records incidents of price-gouging for the animals, supports this idea.

If the temple charged exorbitant rates for the sacrificial animals, and then charged exorbitant rates for the exchange of secular money for temple money, the poor would be excluded from worship. This justifies Jesus' accusation that they were turning God's house into a den of thieves (Matthew 21:13) and is a suitable explanation for His anger. A religious establishment that turned the act of worship into a device for wringing money out of the devout deserved God's wrath. Although it isn't a certainty, this scenario may explain the violence of Jesus' response. (David O'Brien - Today's Handbook of Solving Bible Difficulties)

**Oswald Chambers - The Temple of God Desecration**

And Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought [rv] in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers. . . . (Mark 11:15; cf. John 2:13-17)

We bring to the New Testament a sentimental conception of our Lord; we think of Him as the "meek and mild and gentle Jesus" and make it mean that He was of no practical account whatever. Our Lord was "meek and lowly in heart," yet watch Him in the Temple, meekness and gentleness were not the striking features there. We see instead a terrible Being with a whip of small cords in His hands, overturning the money-changers' tables and driving out men and cattle.††† Is He the "meek and gentle Jesus" there? He is absolutely terrifying; no one dare interfere with Him. Why could He not have driven them out in a gentler way? Because passionate zeal had eaten Him up, with a detestation of everything that dared to call His Father's honour into disrepute.

"Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise"—the deification of commercial enterprise. Everything of the nature of wrong must go when Jesus Christ begins to cleanse His Father's house.

If you have been laid hold of by the Spirit of God don't think it strange concerning the spring-cleaning God is giving you, and don't clamour for anything because it will have to go. The setting apart of my body by the Holy Ghost for a temple of God†† is a terror to everything in me that is not of God. Sensuality and sordidness lurk about the bodily temple until Jesus Christ cleanses it. Sensuality is that which gratifies my particular senses, it is the working of my body in connection with external circumstances whereby I begin to satisfy myself. Sensuality may be unutterably disgusting or it may be amazingly refined, but it is based on the wrong thing and has to go; it can have nothing to do with the temple of God, i.e., with man as God created him.

My body is designed to be a "temple of the Holy Ghost," and it is up to me to stand for the honour of Jesus Christ in my bodily practices. When the Spirit of God comes in, He cleanses the temple and does not let one darling sin lurk. The one thing Jesus Christ insists on in my bodily life is chastity. As individuals we must not desecrate the temple of God† by tampering with anything we ought not to tamper with; if we do, the scourge of God will come. Immediately the Spirit of God comes in we begin to realise what it means—everything that is not of God has to be turned clean out. People are surprised and say, "I was told God would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; well, I asked for the Holy Spirit and expected that He would bring me joy and peace, but I have had a terrible time ever since." That is the sign He has come, He is turning out the "money-changers" and the "cattle,"††† i.e., the things that were making the temple into a trafficking place for self-realisation. We soon find why the Gospel can never be welcome. As long as we speak winsomely about the "meek and gentle Jesus," and the beautiful ideas the Holy Spirit produces when He comes in, people are captivated, but that is not the Gospel. The Gospel does away with any other ground to stand on than that of the Atonement. Speak about the peace of heaven and the joy of the Lord, and men will listen to you; but tell them that the Holy Spirit has to come in and turn out their claim to their right to themselves, and instantly there is resentment—"I can do what I like with my body; I can go where I choose." The majority of people are not blackguards and criminals, living in external sin, they are clean-living and respectable, and it is to such that the scourge of God is the most terrible thing because it reveals that the natural virtues may be in idolatrous opposition to God.

". . . and the seats of them that sold doves."†I may not be giving way to sensuality and sordidness, but I may be crooning a dirge of self-pity—doves in a cage are always cooing—"Oh it is so hard for me, you don't know what I have to give up; doing the will of God is such an enormous cost." Consecration by the Spirit of God means merciless dealing with that kind of thing, He has no sympathy with it. How can we be of the slightest use to God if we are always whining about our own condition? The compromise arising from self-pity is quite sufficient to extinguish the whole purpose of God in a life.

". . . and would not suffer that any men should carry any vessel through the temple." The Spirit of God will not allow me to use my body for my own convenience; the whole limit must be God's. I am not to serve my own ends with my body, I am to serve the ends of Jesus Christ and be a devoted disciple of His. Lust (the spirit of—I must have this thing at once) can have no part or lot in the house of God. So many spend their time in educating themselves for their own convenience—"I want to educate myself, and realise myself." I must not use the temple of God†† for the convenience of self-love; my body must be preserved from trafficking for myself. One of the hardest scourges of God comes just here.

"And He taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. Have I been doing this? What has my soul been busy with during this past year? What have I been thinking in my mind and imagination? I may have been talking about holiness, but what has it meant to me? Is my body the temple of the Holy Ghost†† and am I taking care to see that it is? Is my imagination, and reasoning, and thinking regarded as the house of God? or am I making it a house of merchandise—making it more for me and mine? wanting to go through this in order to grasp something for myself? God does not use us as an exhibition of what He can do. Jesus Christ said, "I am . . . the Truth"; therefore the temple of my body must be consecrated to Him. The Temple was to be the house of prayer for all the nations,††† and my personal life is to be the same. God will bring some extraordinary people to traffic through our temple. Think how we have trafficked through Him! Natural affinities do not count for anything in the spiritual life, but only the affinities produced by the Spirit of God (cf. 1 John 1:7).

**Mark 11:16 and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.**

- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **JESUS BLOCKS THE "THOROUGHFARE"**

**Thoroughfare** describes a main road or public highway, a place of passage from one location to another or heavily traveled passage.

**And He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple-** Jesus is clearly demonstrating His authority in this

action. This refers to people using the Temple as a short cut, passing through with no intention of worshiping. Talk about lack of reverence for the holiness of God! These short-cutters had no respect for God's and were treating the Holy Temple as profane and common, not as holy and separated from the common.

**Barclay** - In point of fact the Temple court provided a short cut from the eastern part of the city to the Mount of Olives. The Mishnah itself lays down, 'A man may not enter into the Temple mount with his staff or his sandal or his wallet, or with the dust upon his feet, nor may he make of it a short by-path.' Jesus was reminding the Jews of their own laws. In his time, Jews thought so little of the sanctity of the outer court of the Temple that they used it as a thoroughfare on their business errands. ([Mark 11 Commentary](#))

**Hendriksen**: By means of the gates it had become rather easy and convenient to use the temple area as a shortcut; for example, between the city and the Mount of Olives. The sacred place was being used for a purely secular purpose.

---

### DEFILING THE HOLY PLACE - J H Jowett

Mark 11:11-19.

IT was a teaching of the old Rabbis that no one should make a thoroughfare of the Temple, or enter it with the dust upon his feet. The teaching was full of sacred significance, however far their practice may have departed from its truth.

Let me not use the Temple as a mere passage to something else. Let me not use my religion as an expedient for more easily reaching "the chief seats" among men. Let me not put on the garments of worship in order that I may readily and quickly fill my purse. Let me not make the sanctuary "a short cut" to the bank!

And let me not carry the dust of the world on to the sacred floor. Let me "wipe my feet." Let me sternly shake off some things—all frivolity, easeful indifference, the spirit of haste and self-seeking. Let me not defile the courts of the Lord.

And let me remember that "the whole earth is full of His glory." Everywhere, therefore, I am treading the sacred floor! Lord, teach me this high secret! Then shall I not demean the Temple into a market, but I shall transform the market into a temple. "Lo, God is in this place, and I knew it not!"

**Mark 11:17 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."**

- **Is it:** 1Ki 8:41-48 Isa 56:7 60:7 Lu 19:46
- **a den:** Jer 7:11 Ho 12:7 Joh 2:16
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PERVERSION OF GOD'S HOUSE OF PRAYER

**And He began to teach** - Lk 19:47 adds **"He was teaching daily in the temple."** One has to love this simple statement. Jesus' death is imminent and He knows it and yet what does He deem to be of the highest value, the greatest yield with the precious seconds He has left on this earth which He created? Teaching! Luke 20:1+ adds "preaching the Gospel!" Given that we "have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21+) and we claim that we abide "in Him (we) ought (ourselves) to walk in the same manner as He walked" (1 John 2:6+), teaching and proclaiming the Gospel! Time was running out quickly for Jesus and yet Jesus continues daily teaching and preaching!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, if we are His followers, our holy charge, our holy privilege is to be diligent to redeem the short time left in each of our lives and enabled by His Spirit of Truth and Word of Truth, we should be about our Father's business just as was our Lord! Are you? The sands of time are running out of the hour glass and eternity is your doorstep. Beloved, do not waste your life in [frivolous](#), [trivial](#) activities. God grant you the desire and the power to [redeem the time](#) teaching and proclaiming the Gospel for the glory of the Lord. Amen

**Began to teach** ([imperfect tense](#) again and again - Lk 19:47+ add "daily")(1321)([didasko](#)) indicates that Jesus was passing on information focused on content, with the purpose of discovering the truth. Synagogue teaching, as illustrated by that of Jesus, was basically expository. The root meaning of **didasko** carries with it the idea of systematic teaching or systematic training. It is the word that is used to refer to a choir director who trains a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they are able to perform. In Scripture to **teach** means to pass on the truth about the Word of God, the God of the Word and the faith of the



saints, with the goal of influencing the understanding and stimulating obedience to the truth taught and resultant Spirit energized transformation and Christ-likeness. The essence of a disciple in fact is that he or she is a learner. The teacher teaches and the disciple hears and processes what is heard so that this truth affects his or her innermost being. Ultimately the purpose of didasko is to shape the will of the one taught. And this is what Jesus was trying to do in these last of His last days!

**THOUGHT** - Right up to the end before Jesus passed on, He continued passing on truth! Quite an example to imitate!

**Matthew** adds that Jesus also continued to perform miraculous healing recording "And the **blind** and the **lame** came to Him in the temple, and **He healed them**. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," (THIS IS WHAT THE CROWDS HAD SHOUTED AS HE RODE INTO JERUSALEM). they became indignant ([aganakteo](#) - 3X IN MARK - Mk 10:14, 41, Mk 14:4)" (Mt 21:14-15) The religious leaders saw the miracles, but still refused to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and instead became angry. This is the description of a stiff-neck and hardened heart!

**And say to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'?"** - Mark's description is more complete than the other synoptic accounts as he adds the words "**for all the nations**" to "**House of prayer**." **Nations** ([ethnos](#)) is synonymous with "**Gentiles**" which has great spiritual significance for as Luke records in (Acts 13:47+ quoting Isaiah 42:6) God "commissioned" the Nation of Israel to be a light to the Gentiles (Nations) declaring "I HAVE PLACED YOU AS **A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES**, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH." In large measure, sadly the Jews rejected and/or ignored their divine commission throughout the centuries. Can you imagine a Gentile wanting to worship God in the Court of the Gentiles which had become a veritable [stockyard](#)! The commission to be a light for the Gentiles would soon be given to a smaller number of select Jews (e.g., see Paul - Acts 26:17-18+).

**Akin** - God's temple is to be a house of prayer, a place of worship that attracts and is for all the nations! It is not a shrine to be admired and praised. It is to exhibit no geographical, national, racial or ethnic segregation or discrimination. None!

**Wuest** - A crowd had gathered, seeing our Lord's actions. This afforded an opportunity for teaching. As usual, our Lord bases His teaching on Old Testament scripture, Mark 11:17 quoting the [LXX](#) of Isaiah 56:7. Referring to the use of the Court of the Gentiles as a market place, Swete says: "Who could pray in a place which was at once a cattle-market and an exchange, where the lowing of oxen mingled with the clinking of silver and the chaffering and haggling of the dealers and those who came to purchase?" The words, "of all nations", Vincent says, imply "by all nations." He suggests the rendering of the Revision, "for all nations." Vincent remarks that the word "thieves" of the A.V., should be "robbers." The word "thief" in Greek is kleptēs, whereas, the word here is leqistepus, "a robber." He says: "The robber, conducting his operations on a large and systematic scale, and with the aid of bands, is thus to be distinguished from the kleptēs, or thief who purloins or pilfers whatever comes to hand. A den would be appropriate to a band of robbers, not thieves." Swete says: "No bandit's cave along the Jericho road (Luke 10:30), by which our Lord had lately come, was the scene of such wholesale robbery as the Mountain of the House." (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Prayer** ([4335](#))([proseuche](#) from **pros** = toward or immediately before + **euchomai** = to pray or vow) is the more general word for prayer and is used only of prayer to God. The prefix **pros** conveys the sense of being immediately before God and hence invokes the ideas of adoration, devotion, and worship. The basic idea of this verb is to bring something, and in prayer this pertains to bringing up prayer requests. In early Greek culture an offering was brought with a prayer that it be accepted. Later the idea was changed slightly, so that the thing brought to God was a prayer. In later Greek, prayers appealed to God for His presence. For believers the necessary "Offering" has been made "For there is one God, and one **Mediator** also between God and men, the **Man Christ Jesus**." (1 Ti 2:5, cf Heb 7:25+ "through Him")

**But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN.**" - Jesus once again is validating that He is indeed the long awaited Messiah of Israel as He quotes from Isaiah and Jeremiah to justify His radical actions...

Isaiah 56:7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For **My house will be called a house of prayer** for all the peoples."

Jeremiah 7:11 "Has this house, which is called by My name, become **a den of robbers** in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," declares the LORD.

**Akin** on **robber's den** - the context of Jeremiah 7:11 is painfully instructive. Jesus is declaring the fulfillment of that ominous prophecy by his symbolic act on this very day. It is a long passage but Jeremiah 7:1-29 is worth reading!



**Kistemaker** amplifies this thought writing "In the days of Jeremiah, too, as is proved by that prophet's famous Temple Discourse, the Jews were oppressing aliens, stealing, murdering, etc. Nevertheless, they continued to offer their sacrifices in the temple; as if such merely formalistic worship of Jehovah would do any good, and as if the very presence of the temple would protect them from the outpouring of God's wrath. It was then that Jeremiah had said,

"Do not trust in lying words (DELIVERED BY FALSE PROPHETS), saying, 'The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, is this.' (Jer 7:4)... Has this house that is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes?" (Jer 7:11)

In the days of Christ's sojourn history was repeating itself: the temple had again become **'a cave of thieves,'** an allusion, perhaps, to the rocky caves in the hills of Judea, where thieves and robbers would often assemble (**ED: THE IRONY IS THESE ROBBERS DID NOT EVEN NEED TO HIDE IN CAVES BUT BLATANTLY CONVERTED GOD'S PLACE OF WORSHIP TO A PLACE OF ROBBERY!**) The thieves were crowding out the Gentiles or "nations." (Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

**Barclay** - Jesus used a vivid metaphor to describe the Temple court. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was notorious for its robbers. It was a narrow winding road, passing between rocky gorges. Among the rocks were caves where the brigands lay in wait, and Jesus said, 'There are worse brigands in the Temple courts than ever there are in the caves of the Jericho road.' ([Mark 11 Commentary](#))

**Brian Bell** on **robber's den** - A place where thieves hide after they've committed their crimes. The Jews were using the temple ceremonies to cover up their secret sins. The Temple can only give sanctuary AS a Sanctuary." (Derek Kidner) When man takes over...God leaves. **Note the Digression:**

1. Mt 21:13 (**My house**) My house shall be called a house of prayer,
2. Mt 23:38 (**your house**) See! Your house is left to you desolate.
3. Mt 24:2 (**No house**) Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

**My house, Your house, No house.**

**Robbers** (3027)(**lestes**) from **lizoma** = to plunder, seize) means one who steals openly and by violence in contrast to **kleptes** which denotes one who steals by stealth. A robber, highwayman, bandit (Mt 27:38; Mk 11:17; 15:27; Lk 10:30, 36; J 10:1, 8; 2 Cor 11:26). A revolutionary, insurrectionist, one who favors the use of force (Jn 18:40). Figuratively **lestes** speaks of unscrupulous, greedy, or overambitious leaders (Jn 10.8) **Zodhiates** - **Judas** was a **thief** (**kleptes** [John 12:6]) doing no violence to anyone. He stole secretly. **Barabbas** was a **robber** (**lēstés** [Jn 18:40 {cf. Mk 15:7}]). Palestine was infested by **robbers** to whom its walks and **caves** afforded a great deal of cover and shelter (cf. Jdg. 9:25; Hos. 6:9; 7:1), hence, the expression "**den of robbers**" (Jer. 7:11; Mt. 21:13). **The temple became a haunt of robbers.** The dealers in the temple market were notorious for their extortion, but it gave them fancied security in their evildoing. It is probable that some of these robbers were really zealots in rebellion against the authority of Rome, so that there was an element of misplaced patriotism and even religion in their proceedings. Josephus identified robbers with zealots. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

**Den** (4693)(**spelaiion** from **speos** = a cave; Eng - **speleology**, **spelunker**) means a cave (Jn 11:38 - demon possessed man's haunt), a den as used by robbers for hiding away from justice and for storing their loot. Figuratively **spelaiion** is used here of the misuse and abuse of the Temple privileges by the dishonest priesthood - a **den of robbers** (Mt 21:13 Mk 11:17 Lk 19:46). They were hiding out as it were in full view of God and man! But the God-man soon remedied that ruse! Describes the place Lot took refuge from God's wrath on Sodom and where the daughters committed incest with him (Ge 19:30). The **cave** of Machpelah was the Abraham's burial site of his wife Sarah (Ge 23:19), later the place of Abraham's burial (Ge 25:9-10) and Jacob (Ge 49:29-30, 50:13). At the time of the Seal Judgments in Revelation 6 we read "Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the **caves** and among the rocks of the mountains." (Rev 6:15±) **Spelaiion** - 6x in 6v - cave(1), caves(2), den(3). Matt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46; Jn. 11:38; Heb. 11:38; Rev. 6:15

**John Blanchard** applies Jesus' actions to our life today asking "Do you have a genuine concern for the glory of God and courage in facing opposition and countering evil in today's society?"

**Kistemaker** - The lessons taught by this cleansing of the temple can be summarized as follows:

- a. Jesus punished degradation of religion and insisted on reverence.

- b. He rebuked fraud, in the present connection especially "religious" (?) racketeering, and demanded honesty.
- c. By declaring that the temple must be a house of prayer *for all the nations*, he gave his endorsement to the wonderful cause of Christian missions. Cf. I Kings 8:41-43; Matt. 28:19.
- d. By means of all this he glorified his heavenly Father. Was not the temple his Father's house? (Ibid)

**ILLUSTRATION** - Jesse James killed a fellow in a bank robbery and shortly thereafter was baptized in the Kearney Baptist Church. Then he killed another man, a bank cashier, and joined the church choir and taught hymn-singing. He liked Sundays, Jesse did, but he couldn't always show up at church...on 2 Sundays, he robbed trains. Do we as church members flee to church on Sundays in an attempt to cover up our sins? Do we "go to church" in order to maintain our reputation, or to worship & glorify God? If Jesus showed up today in our church what changes would he make? If Jesus showed up today in our personal temple(body) what changes would he make?

### **The House of Prayer**

Thy mansion is the Christian's heart,  
O Lord, Thy dwelling-place secure!  
Bid the unruly throng depart,  
And leave the consecrated door.

Devoted as it is to Thee,  
A thievish swarm frequents the place;  
They steal away my joys from me,  
And rob my Saviour of His praise.

There, too, a sharp designing trade  
Sin, Satan, and the World maintain;  
Nor cease to press me, and persuade  
To part with ease, and purchase pain.

I know them, and I hate their din;  
Am weary of the bustling crowd;  
But while their voice is heard within,  
I cannot serve Thee as I would.

Oh! for the joy Thy presence gives,  
What peace shall reign when Thou art there;  
Thy presence makes this den of thieves  
A calm delightful house of prayer.

And if Thou make Thy temple shine,  
Yet, self-abased, will I adore:  
The gold and silver are not mine;  
I give Thee what was Thine before.

Olney Hymns, by William Cowper

### **Related Resource:**

- [How many times did Jesus cleanse the temple? Why did He cleanse the temple?](#)

---

### **Mark 11:17 My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.**

The Lord wants us to pray for all nations, and for kings and for all in authority. We can exercise knee-based influence over leaders whom we may never meet. Here's an example: Prince Edward VII of England was well known for his drinking and immorality. When his mother, Queen Victoria, died in 1901, Edward assumed the throne at age fifty-nine and reigned for nine years. In 1910, a prayer warrior named Joe Evans was vacationing in the New York mountains, away from newspapers and interruptions. One morning he felt a burden to intercede for Edward, and the burden became so intense he anguished in prayer for the king's conversion. The following day came the news, "Edward is dead." Years later, Joe shared dinner with Dr. J. Gregory Mantle of England. Dr. Mantle

said, "Joe, did you know that Edward VII was saved on his deathbed?" He went on to explain: "The king was in France when he was taken ill. He was brought to England and there was hope that he might recover. However, there came a turn for the worse. At that time, His Majesty called one of his lords-in-waiting and ordered him to go to Paternoster Row and secure for him a copy of a tract that his mother, Queen Victoria, had given to him when he was a lad. It was entitled "The Sinner's Friend." After much searching, the lord-in-waiting found the tract, brought it to His Majesty, and upon reading it, King Edward VII made earnest repentance and received the Lord Jesus as his Savior." ([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

---

### **A TEMPLE FIT FOR A KING - Joseph Stowell**

FLEE FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY. . . . DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT? . . . THEREFORE HONOR GOD WITH YOUR BODY. —1 Corinthians 6:18–20

Living in a sensual culture places the follower of Christ in tension with an increasingly seductive environment.

From the subtle erosion of moral sensitivities by a constant dose of the "soaps," to advertisements that push the edges of what is acceptable to sell their products, to the blatant availability of pornography, our generation faces a continual barrage that threatens the very definitions of what is right and wrong. For this we are paying dearly in changed attitudes and the destruction of safe and sane moral boundaries.

Even more important, God's Word notes that when our desires are fulfilled through illegitimate means, we defile the temple of God. That's a heavy charge. When the moneychangers defiled the temple in Christ's day, He turned over their tables and, with a whip, expelled them from the temple. God does not take lightly the defilement of His home. In explaining His actions, Jesus said that His house was intended to be a place of prayer, not a place of sordid gain (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46). Think of the offense to our Lord when our bodies—His home—are used for sinful pleasure.

What, then, shall we do? We must stand as priests at the gates of our temples to guard against the intrusion of moral defilement. It is our responsibility as royal priests to guard the threshold of our eyes, our ears, our minds, our hands, and our total bodies.

Our motive for refusing the defiling input of our world is not simply because someone told us it was bad. We remain pure because we love God enough to guard against anything that would desecrate His dwelling place. My guess is that if we all wore signs that said, "God Lives Here," we would behave differently and would allow far less impurity to seep into His temple.

Is there a guard who is off duty at one of the entrances to the temple of your life?

---

### **Preparation of the Father's House - Henry Morris**

"And he taught, saying unto them. Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mark 11:17).

As we compare the corresponding days of creation week and redemption week, we must note that the chronology of the latter has been the subject of much disagreement among authorities. Although some details are uncertain, we can at least consider this possible additional dimension to the understanding and harmony of the two weeks.

Having created and activated the earth on the first day, God next provided for it a marvelous atmosphere and hydrosphere in which, later, would live the birds and fishes. No other planet is equipped with air and water in such abundance; the earth was uniquely planned for life! The hydrosphere, on the second day, was further divided into waters below and waters above "the firmament" (Hebrew *raqia*, "stretched-out space"). The waters above the firmament probably consisted of a vast blanket of transparent water vapor, maintaining a perfect climate worldwide, with ideal conditions for longevity.

Paralleling the primeval provision of life-sustaining air and water, on day two of redemption week, the Lord entered again into the city (having spent the night in Bethany) and into the temple, which He had called His Father's house (John 2:16). As He approached the city, He cursed the barren fig tree (Mark 11:12-14) and then, in the temple, overthrew the tables of the moneychangers (Mark 11:15-19). Both actions—the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple—symbolize the purging of that which is barren or corrupt in the Creator's kingdom. He had created a world prepared for life (air for the breath of life and water as the matrix of life), but mankind, even the very teachers of His chosen people, had made it unfruitful and impure. As physical life must first have a world of pure air and water, so the preparations for a world of true spiritual life require the purifying breath of the Spirit and the cleansing water of the Word, preparing for the true fruit of the Spirit and the true temple of God's presence, in the age to come. (Days to Remember)

---

### **Pure Worship**

My house will be called a house of prayer. Mark 11:17

Today's Scripture & Insight: Mark 11:15–18

Jose pastored a church known for its programs and theatrical productions. They were well done, yet he worried the church's busyness had slipped into a business. Was the church growing for the right reasons or because of its activities? Jose wanted to find out, so he canceled all extra church events for one year. His congregation would focus on being a living temple where people worshiped God.

Jose's decision seems extreme, until you notice what Jesus did when He entered the temple's outer courts. The holy space that should have been full of simple prayers had become a flurry of worship business. "Get your doves here! Lily white, as God requires!" Jesus overturned the merchant's tables and stopped those who bought their merchandise. Furious at what they were doing, He quoted Isaiah 56 and Jeremiah 7: " 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.' But you have made it 'a den of robbers'" (Mark 11:17). The court of the gentiles, the place for outsiders to worship God, had been turned into a mundane marketplace for making money.

There's nothing wrong with business or staying busy. But that's not the point of church. We're the living temple of God, and our main task is to worship Jesus. We likely won't need to flip over any tables as Jesus did, but He may be calling us to do something equally drastic. By: Mike Wittmer

Why do you attend church and meet with believers? What expectations of yours might you need to let the Spirit change?

Father, show us where our expectations of worship fail to please You. Help us see that it's all about You.

**Mark 11:18 The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.**

- and: Mk 3:6 12:12 14:1,2 Isa 49:7 Mt 21:15,38,39,45,46 26:3,4 Lu 19:47 Joh 11:53-57
- feared: Mk 11:32 6:20 1Ki 18:17,18 21:20 22:8,18 Mt 21:46 Ac 24:25 Rev 11:5-10
- astonished: Mk 1:22 Mt 7:28 Lu 4:22 Joh 7:46
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **JESUS' SCATHING TEACHING SEALS HIS FATE**

Jesus' teaching may have been scathing, but it was faithful to the Word and without a hint of compromise of the Truth! Ours should be the same.

**The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him** - Luke adds they **"were trying to destroy Him."** Daily they sought to destroy Him even as he daily taught. What an example of focus - only a few days to live and even be attacked in the interim, all the while staying focused on the most important thing in all eternity - teaching and preaching the Way of God in truth (Mt 22:16)! The actual cleansing had not been the catalyst for their hatred but now His teaching set them off. What bitter irony -- Jesus is giving out the Word of Life and the "religious" folks are seeking to take His life! Beware, dear faithful follower of Christ that often the most pointed, painful attack at Christ in you will come from those WITHIN the established church! Do not be surprised (cf "there will also be false teachers **AMONG** you" = 2 Pe 2:1<sup>±</sup> and "savage wolves will come in **AMONG** you" = Acts 20:28-30<sup>±</sup>, cf Jude 1:4<sup>±</sup>)

**Akin** - It was popularly believed that when the Messiah came He would cleanse and purge the temple of Gentiles. Instead, Jesus comes and clears and cleanses the temple for Gentiles. Israel's religious show with all its glitz, glitter and fan-fare was an empty embarrassment. Instead of bringing people into God's presence they hid and obscured it to such a degree that no one could find Him. Jesus said enough! Your charade is over. Jesus' protest caught the ear and attention of the Sanhedrin (see also Mk 11:27!) He had called them out and they did not appreciate it one bit. Little wonder that the religious elites wanted to destroy Him. And the stakes are now much higher. It was one thing for Jesus to tick off the country lay preachers called the Pharisees. It is something else to take on the chief priest and the powerful Sanhedrin. Galilee was like the minors. Jerusalem is the major leagues! A showdown is on the horizon. However, fear paralyzed them on this day. As for the crowds they were —astonished||, astounded, struck out of their senses, and not sure what to make of all this teaching. Jesus would, with sadness and grief, leave and go home to Bethany (Mk 11:19). Tomorrow would bring another day of teaching. He would press on.

**Paul Apple** - Why did the religious leaders want to destroy Jesus? He exposed their Hypocrisy - Threat to their Popularity o More

Powerful – look at his miracles o More Profound – look at his teaching – taught with authority Afraid – saw Jesus as a prophet of God – Matt. 22:46 - Threat to their Pocketbook – they had quite a nice racket going in the temple courts This event signed death warrant for Jesus. How fired up does Jesus get when confronted with hypocrisy? Just check out Matt. 23:1-39 and his indictment of the religious leaders of his day. Religious Hypocrisy takes many forms. But in all instances, Hypocrisy puts on an external mask to try to look like something it is not. It dresses itself up in the activities of religion – lots of prayers; lots of donating money; lots of quoting of bible verses; lots of acts of worship – like baptisms and observance of the Lord's Supper; singing and listening to sermons – but no heart reality of genuine faith and no submission to the authority of the Lord. Instead, there is an exchanging of the commandments of God for the traditions of the hypocritical religious leaders.

**Wuest** - The **chief priests and the scribes.**” Swete remarks that this is the first time in the Synoptics that **the chief priests** combine with **the scribes** against Jesus. Our Lord's attack against the Temple-market, incensed them. After this, they take the lead against the Galilean Prophet. They sought means by which to do away with Him. This was not easy, for the crowds at the Passover were mostly from Galilee and the Gentile countries. And they were drawn to our Lord. Such a crowd in its present humor could be dangerous. Stoning was not impossible, even within the Temple precincts, with the priests themselves, the victims. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Chief priests** (749)(**archiereus** from **archo** = first in a series, the leader or ruler, idea of rank or degree + **hieros** = priest - **hieros** is that which is determined, filled or consecrated by divine power) refers to the priest that was chief over all the other priests in Israel. This office was established by God through Moses instructions in the Pentateuch. In the **plural archiereus** refers to all the ruling priests, the members of the high-priestly families as a group, the upper echelons of the priestly class, especially those who served on the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court (Lk 9:22, Mk 8:31). In the **singular archiereus** refers to the acting high priest (Lk 3:2, Mk 14:47, 53, 54, 60, 61, 63, 66), who by Jesus' day was more of a role obtained by political connections than priestly lineage. Don't miss the fact that the chief priests missed the One Who today mediates for all believers as our Great High Priest! (Hebrews 4:14-16+).

**Scribes** (1122)(**grammateus** from **grapho** = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology scribe, expert, scholar (Mt 2.4). Jesus gives a long rebuke including **8 WOES** primarily to the Scribes and Pharisees which should be read to help understand how this group of Jewish religious men functioned (See Mt 23:1-39, 13, 14, 15, 16, etc). Most sources consider the **lawyers** (nomikos - meaning one skilled in the Mosaic law) to be scribes specialized in the jurisprudence of the Law of Moses. Finally the scribes in Lk 5:17 (nomdidaskalos) were teachers of the Jewish law who were equal to the lawyers and scribes.

**Seeking** (2212)(**zeteo**) implies giving attention and priority to and deliberately pursuing after. The **imperfect tense** pictures them seeking over and over, again and again to destroy Jesus.

**Destroy** (622)(**apollumi**) means to kill (this was their continual goal - cf Mt 12:14), something that began the moment He was born, Matthew using this same verb **apollumi** writing (Angel's warning to Joseph) "Herod is going to search for the Child to **destroy** (apollumi) Him." (Mt 2:13) The bitter irony is that the very thing these evil men sought to do to Jesus would come to pass in their own lives for Jesus Himself had taught "He who has found his life will lose (apollumi) it, and he who has lost (apollumi) his life for My sake will find it." (Mt 10:39, Mt 16:25) These evil men thought they had found life but in fact as eternity would prove, they actually lost their life! And the same fate awaits every man today who in one form or another tries to destroy the truth about Christ -- it is they who will be **eternally destroyed!** The tragic irony is that Jesus had just stated His life purpose declaring that "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost (apollumi)." (Lk. 19:10) The Pharisees were lost and did not know it as they sought to kill the very One Who had come to save their souls from **eternal punishment!** What a contrast for these religious leaders were like the thief which Jesus says "comes only to steal and kill and destroy (apollumi); I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (Jn. 10:10)

**for they were afraid of Him** - **Afraid** is **phobeo** in the **imperfect tense** pictures them as being being fearful over and over.

**for** - Term of explanation - They feared people more than God!

**the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching** - This is fascinating. They are still astonished at His teaching and yet so few seem to have received His Words of Truth into their hearts.

**Wuest** - The word "**astonished**" is again that very strong Greek word, **ekplesso** "to strike out of one's senses." The teaching of our Lord was in such contrast to that of the Jewish leaders, that the people saw the difference at once, and were almost beside themselves because of it. **What a commentary upon the type of teaching they had been receiving, dry, formal, stereotyped, without power, above their heads, and the powerful, simple, interesting thought-arresting teaching of our Lord.** (May we all

seek to imitate His teaching style for His glory. Amen) (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

Hearing truth can astonish you, but only believing truth can save you!

**Mark 11:19 When evening came, they would go out of the city.**

- Mk 11:11 Lu 21:37 Joh 12:36
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAILY JESUS WITHDREW FROM THE CITY

**When evening came, they would go out of the city** - Presumably they would return either to Bethany or the Mount of Olives for Luke 21:37+ records "Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet."

**Mark 11:20 As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up.**

- Mk 11:14 Job 18:16,17 20:5-7 Isa 5:4 40:24 Mt 13:6 15:13 21:19,20 Joh 15:6 Heb 6:8 Jude 1:12
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He \*said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered.

## CURSED FIG TREE WITHERED COMPLETELY

**As they were passing by in the morning** - They came early to get in a full day in the Holy City. Day 3 of Passion Week would be a busy time. Luke 21:38 adds that "all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him."

**Wuest** - The words "in the morning," follow the words "as they passed by," in the Greek text. Expositors says this is important. "It gives the emphasis as suggesting that it was in the clear morning light that they noticed the tree. It might have been in the same condition the previous evening, but it would be dark when they passed the spot." (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Morning** (4404)(**proi** from **pro** = before) is an adverb of time closely paralleling our English word early or the phrase in the morning. Proi means early, in the (early) morning; in Jewish time reckoning, the last watch of the night. Mark uses the term **proi** to refer to the fourth watch of the night, the hours from 3 to 6 a.m. All uses in Mark - Mk. 1:35; Mk. 11:20; Mk. 13:35; Mk. 15:1; Mk. 16:2; Mk. 16:9;

**they saw the fig tree withered from the roots(rhiza) up** - All **saw** the after effects of Jesus' words the day before. [perfect tense](#) is in the [perfect tense](#) showing that the tree was completely withered away, in a state of death! The fig tree went from abundance to blight! Don't miss this object lesson! I live in Texas and in the heat of August the leaves of the trees become very dry and withered and one wonders if the tree will even survive. But when the Spring comes, the leaves return and you know the tree is still alive. That would never be the case with this fig tree for it was **withered** from the bottom to the top! When **the roots** are dead, the tree is dead and no amount of watering will revive the tree.

Jesus' last miracle in Mark (prior to the resurrection) brings death not life!

-- Mark Akin

**Paul Apple** - Such a radical change (had been a healthy, robust flowering tree) in just a 24 hour period Such a permanent change – some water and some nurturing care was not going to bring this tree back to good health

**Constable**: This event happened on Wednesday morning [Day 3]. "Withered from the roots" means that death was spreading through the tree, emanating from its sources of nourishment. The "roots" of the tree correspond to the religious leaders of the nation.



The curse of spiritual death would spread from them to that whole generation of unbelieving Jews. Peter connected the judgment with Jesus' words. In parallel fashion, Jesus' pronouncement of judgment on that generation of Jews would have a similar effect. Rather than explaining the symbolic significance of the cursing of the fig tree, Jesus proceeded to focus on the means by which the miracle happened.

[Mark Akin](#) has an insightful comment - The fig tree event brackets, serves as bookends to, the temple story and interprets it for us. It clearly reveals that Jesus did not just cleanse the temple. He cursed it. It had failed in the divine assignment given to it by God and it would be destroyed. With no fruit found, its use was at an end. God would remove it and do so in a dramatic fashion in less than a generation when the Romans invaded under the general Titus (A.D. 70) and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple....Sympathy for a soul-less tree in our day is badly misplaced and says much about our sloppy sentimental culture and its tragic perversion of real values. God had told Jonah to weep over lost people not a plant! Jesus says weep over a dead temple not a dead tree.

**Fig tree** (4808)([suke](#) from [sukon](#) = a fig) is the fig-tree the Latin word [ficus](#) (see [Wikipedia](#)). The LXX distinguishes between the early fig and the (unripe) late fig ([olunthos](#)), and also has [sukon](#) for the "fig orchard." The fig tree is an ancient and important tree in Palestine and claims special dignity in Judges 9:7ff. Uses in Mark - Mk. 11:13; Mk. 11:20; Mk. 11:21; Mk. 13:28;

**Withered** (dry) (3583) [xeraino](#) from [xeros](#) = dry) means to become dry, to dry up and figuratively to become stiff (Mk 9:18). Of plants that wither (Jas 1:11). In the passive voice means to be dried up (Mt 13:6; 21:19, 20; Mk 4:6; 11:20, 21; Lk 8:6; Jn 15:6; 1 Pe 1:24). All uses in NT - Matt. 13:6; Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:20; Mk. 3:1; Mk. 4:6; Mk. 5:29; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 11:20; Mk. 11:21; Lk. 8:6; Jn. 15:6; Jas. 1:11; 1 Pet. 1:24; Rev. 14:15; Rev. 16:12

**Mark 11:21 Being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."**

- Pr 3:33 Zec 5:3,4 Mt 25:41 1Co 16:22
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:20 Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?"

### PETER RECALLS JESUS CURSE

**Being reminded** - "Only in Mark and due to Peter's story. For his quick memory see also Mk 14:72." (Robertson)

**Being reminded** (363)([anamimnesko](#) from [ana](#) = again + [mimnesko](#) = remember so literally recall again is more forceful than [mimnesko](#) alone) carries idea of carefully thinking back and reconstructing something in one's mind ("call over in your minds, one by one), not merely remembering. In passive voice as in this passage, it means to be reminded.

**Peter said to Him** - Peter clearly is the spokesman for Mt 21:20 says the disciples asked.

**Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."** - Peter cried, "**behold**," or "look." It is not the exclamation "lo," but the aorist imperative singular, bidding Jesus to take a look at the withered tree. "It almost sounds as if Peter blamed Jesus for what he had done to the fig tree." (Robertson) Jesus had asserted that it would henceforth be fruitless, but now it was totally dead!

[Paul Apple](#) has an excellent comment - Peter sounds surprised here – how could this have happened so quickly and with such devastating results? Thing about Hypocrisy (**SEE ARTICLE ON [Hypocrisy-Hypocrites](#)**): it looks healthy, but it is rotten to the core – that tree that outwardly just the day before had professed such health and vitality with its leaves of promise had already been nothing more than a white-washed sepulcher (**ED: "FULL OF DEAD MEN'S BONES"** - Mt 23:27) -- So it should not have been surprising that Jesus reduced it to the withered up shell it was in reality...

**The exposure of Hypocrisy ...  
not the extinguishing of life**

**Abbott** comments, "But both in nature and in grace fruitlessness always issues in death. It is only by and through fruit-bearing that life is ever perpetuated"

**Mark Akin** - —Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered. || It is dead. John 15:6 warns us, —If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. || Sinclair Ferguson is —spot on||, —the question of our spiritual fruitfulness is one of immense seriousness which we ignore at our peril....Jesus means what He says! (Let's Study Mark, 185)

**Hiebert** - Peter's thoughts had been elsewhere, but the sight of the dry fig tree in a flash recalled the events of yesterday. Only Mark noted that Peter acted as spokesman to express the surprise of the disciples (Matt. 21:20). Peter at once connected the condition of the tree with the word of Jesus. He recognized that its present condition was no ordinary event.

**Swete** remarks that the connection between the withered tree and the Lord's words on the previous morning, flashed through Peter's mind.

**Curse (2672) (kataraomai)** from **katara** = a curse from **kata** = down + **ara** = a prayer, a curse) literally is to curse down and so to call a curse down upon someone or some thing as in the case of the fig tree.

**J C Ryle:** Let us take care that we each individually learn the lesson that this **fig tree** conveys. Let us always remember, that baptism, and church-membership, and reception of the Lord's Supper, and a diligent use of the outward forms of Christianity, are not sufficient to save our souls. **They are leaves, nothing but leaves, and without fruit will add to our condemnation. Like the fig leaves of which Adam and Eve made themselves garments, they will not hide the nakedness of our souls from the eye of an all-seeing God, or give us boldness when we stand before Him at the last day. No! we must bear fruit, or be lost forever. There must be fruit in our hearts and fruit in our lives, the fruit of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and true holiness in our conversation. Without such fruits as these a profession of Christianity will only sink us lower into hell.**

**Mark 11:22** And Jesus answered saying to them, '**Have** faith in God.

- **Have:** Mk 9:23 2Ch 20:20 Ps 62:8 Isa 7:9 Joh 14:1 Tit 1:1
- **faith in God:** Col 2:12
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen.

## PRESENT TENSE FAITH IN GOD

**And Jesus answered saying to them, 'Have faith in God** - In Matthew's parallel Jesus introduction with "**Truly (amen) I say**" indicates that what follows is important and authoritative. Have is a command in the [present imperative](#) calling for continual (lifestyle, habitual) trust in, belief in or reliance **on God** and in this case I would submit is only possible to obey as we are enabled by [the Holy Spirit](#). Note that have is plural, so Jesus is not just responding to Peter, but to the Twelve.

**Paul Apple** - You would have thought that Jesus would have spoken more directly to the issue of Hypocrisy – and He actually does by addressing the need for genuine faith instead of a self-righteousness that is oriented towards external works – but he makes the application to the exercise of that faith in believing prayer – talking about the means by which Jesus performed the miracle ... not the significance of the cursing itself

Matthew 21:21 records that the Twelve were **amazed (thamazo)** which expresses the idea of one's response when confronted by divine revelation in some form, in this case Jesus' words withering the tree in 24 hours. Of course, ultimately what are the amazed at? They are clearly amazed at the authority and power of Jesus which was clearly evident by the dead fig tree. It is notable that they do not ask Jesus to explain what He had cursed the fig tree. Jesus does not explain it but instead calls them to change their focus from the dead fig tree to living God going on to emphasize the importance that they **have faith in God** and in this context specifically in the power of God which they have seen displayed. Note the important point that faith is not faith in "faith" or faith in something nebulous, but is in the living God as the object of their faith. Faith is only as good as the object in which it trusts, in this case the ever trustworthy, always faithful God. Of course He wants them to have faith in Him, but His focus here is upon **faith in God**.

**Wuest** ties this together nicely explaining that "This is just another instance in the life of our Lord that brings to view **His humanity and His dependence upon God the Holy Spirit, for the words He uttered, the prayers which He prayed, the miracles He performed, and the life which He lived, was as the Man Christ Jesus, doing all this in the energy of the Holy Spirit.** Our Lord exercised faith in the cursing of the fig tree. He presses home the lesson of the necessity of faith to the disciples. The word "God" is in the genitive case, showing here the object of faith." (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

Peter came to fully comprehend this truth of Jesus' dependence on the Spirit declaring "you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God **anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power**, and how He went about doing good (HOW? BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!) and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:37-38+)

**THOUGHT** - This truth cannot be overemphasized, the truth about Jesus giving the disciples (and us) an example to imitate by walking and working depending on the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter and the disciples would not understand fully until the Spirit came at Pentecost and indwelt them and subsequently supernaturally empowered them to "turn the world upside down!" Beloved, we have access to that same Power and in fact to live this Christian life to the glory of God we must daily learn to depend on the Spirit's power. Christianity is not natural but supernatural. Sadly, too many saints because of ignorance of their need for the Spirit and God's abundant promise of power from the Spirit, fail to partake of His enablement. Instead they attempt to live the supernatural life in their own (natural) strength which will always lead be futile and lead to frustration. Remember, Peter denied Christ 3x relying on his natural strength but boldly proclaimed Christ in the very city He was crucified only 40 days earlier! We have that same Power Source beloved. Read [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#) and see the chart comparing [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#) which emphasizes the importance of being "filled" with the Word for those who desire to be filled with the Spirit.

**Hiebert** - The fact that He had cursed the fruitless tree did not raise a moral problem for the disciples. (IN CONTRAST TO SOME OF THE COMMENTARIES!) Concerning the significance of the action, they did not inquire, and He left the point unexplained, allowing later events to make it clear to them. His reply was a gentle rebuke of their lack of faith in the power of His word. The withered fig tree gave them a vivid demonstration of its power. Let them maintain that faith amid what lay ahead.

**Mark Akin** on **Have faith in God** - The great missionary Hudson Taylor said, —God uses men who are weak and feeble enough to lean on Him. || He is faithful 14 when the religious establishment and its institutions fail. Trust the One who judges with severity and extends amazing grace to those who do not deserve it but seek it in faith.

**Swete** "The answer is remarkable; the Lord does not explain the lesson to be learned from the fate of the tree, but deals with a matter of more immediate importance to the Twelve, the lesson to be learnt from the prompt fulfillment of His prayer (**ED**: THE ROOT IDEA OF "CURSE" IS **kata** = down + **ara** = a prayer)."

**Robertson** - That was the lesson for the disciples from the curse on the fig tree so promptly fulfilled.

**Steven Lawson** on this faith Jesus is calling for in His disciples...

- the imperative of faith – divine command; not a suggestion
- the object of faith; not have faith in faith = positive thinking movement
- the exclusivity of faith – this is all that Jesus required of them – for salvation; sanctification; not faith plus anything else; sola fide
- the responsibility of faith – each and every person is responsible before God to exercise their own will; parents cannot believe for their children
- The urgency of faith – right now; not when you can get around to it or feel like doing it

**Hendriksen**: But what is faith?

**Faith is:**

- The soul's window through which God's love comes pouring in.
- The openhand whereby man reaches out to God, the Giver.
- The coupling that links man's train to God's engine.
- The trunk of salvation's tree, whose root is grace, and whose fruit is good works.

## Faith was:

- The means of Abraham's justification.
- The magnet that drew Moses away from the pleasures of Egypt, so that he threw in his lot with God's sorely afflicted people.
- The force that overthrew Jericho's wall.
- The secret that enabled Ruth to make her stirring confession.
- The weapon that killed Goliath and destroyed Sennacherib's host.
- The deciding factor in Carmel's contest.
- The shield that protected Job in the midst of his trials.
- The muzzle that closed the mouths of Daniel's lions.
- The remedy that cured the centurion's servant and many others.

## Scripture also describes faith as:

- Leaning on the everlasting arms.
- Committing one's way to the Lord, trusting in him, knowing that he will do whatever is best.
- Receiving the kingdom (or rule) of God as a little child.
- Being sure of what we hope for, and being convinced of what we do not see.
- The victory that overcomes the world.

The list could go on ... how about in your life – What has faith accomplished? What does faith look like in your life?

**Faith** (4102)(**pistis**) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. Swindoll adds that **pistis** "denotes confidence in the reliability of a person or thing and can describe one's trust in a person's word, a compact or treaty, or a deity (or deities). The term implies both knowledge and action. One may receive knowledge of a certain truth and may even offer verbal agreement, but "trust" or "confidence" is not said to be present until one's behavior reflects that truth.

**Maclaren** writes that "**Faith** is the hand that grasps. It is the means of communication, it is the channel through which the grace which is the life, or, rather, I should say, the life which is the grace, comes to us. It is the open door by which the angel of God comes in with his gifts. It is like the petals of the flowers, opening when the sunshine kisses them, and, by opening, laying bare the depths of their calyxes to be illuminated and coloured, and made to grow by the sunshine which itself has opened them, and without the presence of which, within the cup, there would have been neither life nor beauty. So faith is the basis of everything; the first shoot from which all the others ascend...**Faith works**. It is the foundation of all true work; even in the lowest sense of the word we might almost say that. But in the Christian scheme it is eminently the underlying requisite for all work which God does not consider as busy idleness."

It has well been said that **faith** is not believing in spite of evidence  
—that's superstition—  
but obeying in spite of circumstances and consequences.

## Related Resources:

- Multiple articles (Spurgeon, J C Ryle, Thomas Watson, Thomas Brooks, et al) @ [Saving Faith](#)

---

## FAITH MARK 11:22 - James Smith in Handfuls of Purpose

Consecration to God and faith in God ought to characterise every servant of God. And who can tell the limits of the possibilities of such? There are many believers in Jesus, but few consecrated to Him. Fewer still who actually prove His faithfulness in fulfilling all His promises.

### I. THE NATURE OF FAITH.—

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, etc. (Heb. 11:1). Faith acknowledges the things unseen, and acts as if they were visible. So Noah built the ark (v. 7). So Moses forsook Egypt (v. 27). "Seeing Him who is invisible." "Blessed is he who hath not seen and yet hath believed" (John 20:29). Through faith Jacob coveted the

birthright (Gen. 25:31). And because Esau could not see its value he despised it and sold it. "Oh, I see it" is not equivalent to "Oh, I believe it." For with the heart man believeth (Rom. 10:10). God judgeth the heart. A clear head is no evidence of a believing heart.

## II. THE OBJECT OF FAITH.—

Have faith in GOD" (Mark 11:22). Means must be used, but means must not be the object of trust. They are but the ditches we dig. God must fill them (2 Kings 3:16). God can be trusted to fulfil every promise He hath made, for "God is faithful" (1 Cor. 10:13). He says, "I will not suffer My faithfulness to fail" (Ps 89:33). And again, "My covenant I will not break. Nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips" (Ps. 89:34). How, then, can His power be doubted. Nothing shall be impossible with God. "Is anything too hard for Me?" (Jer. 32:27). The object of our faith is "One who cannot lie," One who cannot change, One who cannot fail.

## III. THE GROUND OF FAITH.—

The WORD OF GOD which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23). "He that believeth as the Scriptures hath said" (John 7:38). Every word of God is purified (Prov. 30:5). There is no dross, nothing to be put away. To be received just as it is given. We are to desire the sincere milk of the Word. Many seek to boil it down before receiving it. They attempt to refine what God has already purified. The Word is not only pure, but "sure." "Sure Word of prophecy." The Word of the Lord shall stand for ever (Isa. 40:8). Because it is already "settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89). Then the ground of our faith is as faithful and true as the Object of it.

## IV. THE EXERCISE OF FAITH.—

Abraham believed God (Rom. 4:5), and went out, not knowing whither he went (Heb. 11:8). He had but "His Word," as we have. Caleb believed God when he said "Let us go up at once and possess it" (Num. 13:30). God had promised to give them the land, and he believed although the difficulties were great and numberless Peter believed when he said, "Nevertheless (although there seemed nothing but failure), at Thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). His word was all he had, but it was enough. And he even ventured to walk on the sea with a "Come" from Jesus. Paul exercised faith when he said, "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25). Do you?

## V. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF FAITH.—

Believe and thou shalt see (John 11:40). Did Abraham not believe and see when made rich? And Caleb? Peter believed and saw a great draught. What was Joshua's testimony? "There failed not aught which the Lord had spoken. All came to pass" (Josh. 21:45). What was Solomon's testimony 400 years after? "Blessed be the Lord, there hath not failed one word of all which He promised" (1 Kings 8:56). Again, in Mark 14:16, we read, the disciples went forth and found, as He had said unto them. If they had not gone forth they could not have proved the truthfulness of His word. Is there a single case where faith has been disappointed in all the Revelation of God? And if not, will there ever be one?

## VI. THE NEED OF FAITH.—

Have faith in God. He cannot do many mighty works through us, because of our unbelief. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20). All things whatsoever ye ask, believing, ye shall receive (Matt. 21:22). "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's." This is either true or it is not true. If it is not true, we can have no confidence in God If it is true, then why is it not our experience? Might Jesus not say to us: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that I have spoken. Let the question be faced. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Matt. 9:28). If He can say to you, "Great is thy faith," you may also expect that it shall be unto you, "even as thou wilt." (Matt. 15:28).

## VII. THE RESULT OF FAITH.—

Many wonderful results are recorded in Heb. 11. It would be impossible to mention all the possibilities of faith, since it is written, "according to your faith it shall be done unto you." There is no limit given. We are straightened in ourselves. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Elias prayed, and it rained not by the space of three years and a half. He prayed again, and the heaven gave rain (James 5:17-18). Hezekiah trusted in the Lord God, and there was none like him (2 Kings 18:5). There are none to-day like those who trust God.

**This is a word of encouragement for the—**

1. Seeking Sinner (Acts 16:31).
2. Trembling Believer (Psalm 73:23).
3. Tempted Follower (Gen. 15:1).
4. Bereaved Sufferer (Gen. 45:26).
5. Penitent Backslider (Isaiah 55:7).
6. Discouraged Worker (Isaiah 59:19).
7. Dying Christian (Psalm 23:4).

---

**FAITH MARK 11:22 - James Smith in Handfuls of Purpose**

1. The Nature of Faith, Heb. 11:1
2. The Object of Faith, "God."
3. The Ground of Faith. What the "Scriptures hath said," John 7:38
4. The Need of Faith, Heb. 11:6
5. The Example of Faith, Mark 14:16
6. The Results of Faith, Heb. 11.

---

**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "Have faith in God."—Mark 11:22**

Faith is the foot of the soul by which it can march along the road of the commandments. Love can make the feet move more swiftly; but faith is the foot which carries the soul. Faith is the oil enabling the wheels of holy devotion and of earnest piety to move well; and without faith the wheels are taken from the chariot, and we drag heavily. With faith I can do all things; without faith I shall neither have the inclination nor the power to do anything in the service of God. If you would find the men who serve God the best, you must look for the men of the most faith. Little faith will save a man, but little faith cannot do great things for God. Poor Little-faith could not have fought "Apollyon;" it needed "Christian" to do that. Poor Little-faith could not have slain "Giant Despair;" it required "Great-heart's" arm to knock that monster down. Little faith will go to heaven most certainly, but it often has to hide itself in a nut-shell, and it frequently loses all but its jewels. Little-faith says, "It is a rough road, beset with sharp thorns, and full of dangers; I am afraid to go;" but Great-faith remembers the promise, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; as thy days, so shall thy strength be;" and so she boldly ventures. Little-faith stands desponding, mingling her tears with the flood; but Great-faith sings, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;" and she fords the stream at once. Would you be comfortable and happy? Would you enjoy religion? Would you have the religion of cheerfulness and not that of gloom? Then "have faith in God." If you love darkness, and are satisfied to dwell in gloom and misery, then be content with little faith; but if you love the sunshine, and would sing songs of rejoicing, covet earnestly this best gift, "great faith."

---

**Mark 11:22 Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.**

The margin of the a.v. suggests that this command might be rendered, Have the faith of God. As long as I live I shall remember this text in connection with my first meeting with Hudson Taylor. He was to preach for me on a Sunday morning, now years ago, and gave out this as his text. But he said that he had always interpreted it as dealing rather with God's faith to us than ours to Him; so that it ran thus: Reckon on God's faithfulness.

1. We must be sure that we are on God's plan. — There is a prepared path for us, along which God has stored up all necessary supplies. But if we want those supplies, we must find and follow it. Along the track which he has marked out between this and Home, our Father has erected cairns full of provisions; but we must let his route prevail over our own notions and wishes, if we are to enjoy his preparations.

2. We must be prepared to wait on Him.—For these things He will be inquired of. Though He knows what we need, He expects our humble request, that we may be perpetually reminded of our entire dependence on Him. He sometimes appears to tarry, to draw out our faith and prayer. But He will never utterly fail.

3. We must walk worthily of Him.—God shows Himself strong only on behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him. By his enabling grace we must put away the old manner of life, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind, that we may be such whom the great God shall delight to honor. Let such trust Him to the hilt; they will find Him faithful. He will never put us into positions of peril and responsibility, and leave us to take our chance. - **Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily**

---

**God-Centered Faith**



Have faith in God. — Mark 11:22

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:12-24

During difficult times we often lament, "If only I had more faith!" Yet we demonstrate in everyday life that the most important issue is not the amount of our faith but the object of our faith. For instance, whenever we sit down in a chair, we trust that it will support us. Our faith is in the chair, not in how much faith we possess.

In Mark 11:12-24, Jesus taught His disciples the importance of having the right object of faith. It began when they overheard Jesus curse a fig tree (v.14). The next morning, Peter exclaimed, "Look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away" (v.21). Jesus replied, "Have faith in God" (v.22). Having declared God as the object of faith, Jesus assured them that they too could pray for and receive amazing results through God-centered faith. And so may we.

Often, however, we praise those who have great faith in God. Ian Thomas once preached: "When we congratulate people for having faith in our Creator, we're really saying that God is so decrepit they're to be congratulated for believing in Him." He continued, "To become less conscious of faith, we must become more acquainted with the object of faith."

Get to know God better. Then to trust Him will become as natural as trusting the chair you're sitting on! By: Joanie Yoder [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

My faith has found a resting place—  
Not in device nor creed:  
I trust the Ever-living One—  
His wounds for me shall plead.  
—Edmunds

Our faith may not be great but our God is.

---

### Mark 11:22 - "The Faith of God"

OUR Lord, in the presence of the withered fig tree, said to His disciples: "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). Really He said, "Have the faith of God." Then He went on to say, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Now here is a bona-fide promise in black and white, and if we actually believed these words, our lives would be revolutionized until we would almost need to be introduced to ourselves! What kind of faith is this?

It is God's faith, not ours. We cannot stir up mountain-moving faith. It is the same faith by which we believe unto salvation (Eph. 2:8). The faith by which we live is the faith of the Son of God, not merely faith in Him (Gal. 2:20). Yet the sinner must will to believe; when he does, God gives him faith to believe. This same faith he must now exercise, and it increases by exercises. And don't forget that it is nourished on the Word of God: "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). "Many of them which heard the word believed" (Acts 4:4).

This faith desires: "What things soever ye desire." Only those who hunger and thirst after righteousness really are filled, and only those who really desire great things from God ever get them. There is no real concern today, no burden to see mountains move!

God's faith forgives. Our Lord goes on to say in Mark 11:25-26 that we are to forgive, and that if we forgive not, our Father will not forgive. We can pray with confidence toward God only when our hearts condemn us not, and an unforgiving spirit does not make for a conscience void of offense.

Then God's faith asks: "Every one that asketh receiveth." We are told to ask, seek, knock, which means progressive praying that moves on with importunity until it gets what it seeks. Here is no superficial sentence-praying, but real supplication and intercession.

God's faith wills. Jesus said to the Syrophenician woman, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28). When we are fully yielded to God, He works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). He wills through us the things that are in His will, and such things of course we receive.

God's faith commands: "Whosoever shall say, Be thou removed." God has told us to command Him concerning the work of His hands (Isa. 45:11). When we pray the prayer of faith we may come boldly, for we speak with the authority of another.

God's faith believes. Having asked and commanded, it believes it shall receive. Like Hannah, the believer goes away with his

countenance no more sad, resting in the Lord. Like Abraham, he staggers not at the promise of God. God's faith never fails. We are plainly promised that we shall receive. God's faith will remove any mountain God wants moved. A life utterly yielded, fed on the Word, with sin confessed, seeking God's glory—in such a life God will plant a mighty faith that will move mountains. (Vance Havner)

Adrian Rogers - Faith must have the right object before it can be real faith. Sometimes people say, "Just have faith. Only believe." Whenever a person says to me, "Just have faith," the first question in my mind is, "Faith in what?" They say, "Only believe." I ask, "Only believe what?"

There is no power in faith alone. Don't think there's something mystical or magical about just believing. Your faith is no better than its object. Misplaced faith is dangerous.

It is not faith that moves mountains; it is God who moves mountains.

---

**W H Griffith-Thomas** - Faith as revealed to us in Scripture is of a twofold nature; there is the faith that asks and the faith that accepts; the faith that appeals and the faith that appropriates. This is probably the reason why prayer and thanksgiving are so often associated in the writings of St. Paul. They represent to us the two aspects of faith. Prayer is the faith that asks; thanksgiving is the faith that takes. We lose a great deal in our Christian life by failure to distinguish between these two aspects of faith. We keep on asking, when we ought to commence accepting. "Believe that ye have received, and ye shall have" (Mark 11:24). Two intimate friends were once lunching together, and after the host had said the usual grace, "For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful," his friend asked him when he was expecting to have that prayer answered. "What do you mean," was the reply. "Why," was the rejoinder, "to my certain knowledge you have been praying for the last twenty-five years to be made thankful: is it not about time that you were thankful?" This friend was trying to illustrate the difference between praying to be made thankful, and saying, "I am thankful." In the same way in the Christian life there comes a time when we should cease asking and commence obtaining. This is the value of the distinction between God's promises and God's facts. The promises are to be pleaded and their fulfilment expected. The facts are to be accepted and their blessings at once used. When we read, "My grace is sufficient for thee," it is not a promise to be pleaded, but a fact to be at once accepted and enjoyed. When we say "The Lord is my shepherd," we are not dealing with a promise or the groundwork of prayer, we are concerned with one of the present realities of the Christian experience. A man kneels down before leaving home in the morning and asks God for grace to be kept every moment that day. Then he rises at once and goes about his work. Has he done all his duty in thus simply asking for grace? There was something more and better that he should have done. He should have given a moment more after asking, for the purpose of taking, by saying to God, "O my God and Father, I believe that Thou art now giving me the grace that I have asked for; I here and now take Thy grace." As the hymn aptly puts it, "I take, He undertakes."

The faith that takes is the secret of power and blessing, and the more trust of this kind we exercise the more power and the more fulness will come into our Christian life; and day by day we shall live a life of faith and shall say with the Apostle, "I can do all things through Him who is empowering me" (Phil.4:18: Greek), because we are able to say, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

---

### **Mountains Can Move!**

Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God." — Mark 11:22

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:20-24

A familiar slogan about prayer is, "Prayer changes things." But prayer doesn't do this—God does. Some people think that prayer itself is the source of power, so they "try prayer," hoping "it will work" for them. In Mark 11, Jesus disclosed one of the secrets behind all true prayer: "Have faith in God." Not faith in faith, not faith in prayer, but "faith in God" (v.22).

Jesus told His disciples they could command a mountain to be cast into the sea, and if they believed it would happen, it would. Jesus then gave them His meaning behind that astonishing promise. He said, "Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will" (v.24). Jesus was speaking about answered prayer. We can ask and receive answers only if our asking is directed to God in faith and according to His will (1 John 5:14).

I've often wished that I could move mountains by faith. Having once lived in Switzerland, I'd like God to move the Alps into my backyard in England. But He has done something much more important: He has removed mountains of worry, fear, and resentment from my heart and cast them into oblivion through my faith in Him. He is still in the mountain-moving business! Have faith in God and pray! By: Joanie Yoder

When the Spirit prompts the asking,  
When the waiting heart believes,

Then we know of each petition—  
Everyone who asks receives.  
—Anon.

Faith is the key to answered prayer.

---

## The Faithfulness Of God

Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God." —Mark 11:22

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:20-26

Some of Jesus' words to His disciples about having faith in God leave me wondering if I can ever exercise that level of trust and confidence in prayer. I can't recall telling a mountain to relocate itself into the ocean and watching it happen.

Hudson Taylor, pioneer missionary to China, said that Jesus' words in Mark 11:22, "Have faith in God," could be translated, "Hold on to the faithfulness of God."

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, former pastor of London's Westminster Chapel, appreciated Taylor's insight and said: "Faith is holding on to the faithfulness of God and, as long as you do that, you cannot go wrong. Faith does not look at the difficulties. . . . Faith does not look at itself or at the person who is exercising it. Faith looks at God . . . . Faith is interested in God only, and it talks about God and it praises God and it extols the virtues of God. The measure of the strength of a man's faith, always, is ultimately the measure of his knowledge of God. . . . He knows God so well that he can rest on the knowledge. And it is the prayers of such a man that are answered."

"Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations" (Ps. 119:89-90). By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Trust in Him, ye saints, forever—  
He is faithful, changing never;  
Neither force nor guile can sever  
Those He loves from Him.  
—Kelly

Life is not always fair, but God is always faithful.

**Mark 11:23 "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 will be granted him.**

- **whoever:** Mt 17:20 21:21 Lu 17:6 1Co 13:2
- **says:** Mt 14:13 Ro 4:18-25 Heb 11:17-19 Jas 1:5-8
- **believes that what he says is going to happen** Ps 37:4 Joh 14:13 jN 15:7
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passage

Matthew 21:21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen.

## MOUNTAIN MOVING FAITH

**Andrew Murray** well said that "Christ actually meant prayer to be the great power by which His church should do its work and the neglect of prayer is the great reason the church has not greater power over the masses in Christian and heathen countries...The power of the church to truly bless rests on intercession: asking and receiving Heavenly gifts to carry to men."

**Truly (amen) I say to you** - This "[amen](#)" formula indicates an important truth spoken with authority (an "amen!" so to speak). **Amen** "gives self-authenticating authority to the words of Jesus." (Akin)

**Truly I say** in Mark - Mk. 3:28; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 10:15; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 11:23; Mk. 12:43; Mk. 13:30; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 14:18; Mk. 14:25; Mk. 14:30;

**Whoever says to this mountain** - Jesus is using [hyperbole](#) to make His point, mountain metaphor "representing represents what appears to be impossible, immovable, something beyond our finite ability! Good! This is where faith begins. Believing faith taps into God's power to accomplish His purpose. Again hear Andrew Murray who said, —We have a God who delights in impossibilities." ([Akin](#))

Jesus is following up His command to continually have faith in God. Removing a mountain is a bigger task than blighting a fig tree! Jesus has just responded to the disciples' amazement over His words that withered a tree with the command to have faith in God. Clearly the connection is that the fig tree withered with Jesus' words because of the power of God. He is explaining now how they can "tap" into that same power. And He does this by picturing an even more incredible demonstration of power of moving a mountain (probably alluding to the Mount of Olives). Of course He did not mean they were to go about moving mountains, but that they were to lay hold of faith in God, a "mountain moving" type of faith. He explains that this doubt is the antithesis of belief and is the enemy that prevents one from tapping into the power of God in prayer. "The statement of Jesus is a picture of that which is utterly impossible with men, yet can be accomplished through faith in the power of God." (Hiebert)

**Hiebert** comments that this is "a statement of expectancy. Jesus assumes that someone would find it in his heart to make such a statement. Far from condemning it, Jesus pointed out the conditions under which it would receive certain fulfillment. **"This mountain"** has primary reference to the Mount of Olives, but the whole statement is obviously figurative. Neither Jesus nor His disciples went about uprooting literal mountains."

**Be taken up and cast into the sea,'** - The request is marked by two commands both in the [aorist imperative](#) boldly calling for this to be carried out with expediency. Both of these command are in the [passive voice](#) which is important because it means the effecting agent or power to take up and to cast into comes from a Source outside of the one who speaks the request. In short both passives are excellent examples of the so-called divine passive which indicates that God is the Source of the power to energize and effect the successful completion of these commands and bring about the expected result.

**Hiebert** - "the command of faith in the face of an impossible situation. Be removed (more literally, "be taken up") and cast are aorist imperative, commanding acts that must take place at once. The passive voice implies that God is the agent behind the actions. "The sea" may refer either to the Dead Sea, visible from the Mount of Olives, or to the Mediterranean, but the metaphorical teaching is the complete disappearance of the encountered difficulty (ED: WHATEVER THE "MOUNTAIN" IS FOR WHICH ONE IS PRAYING TO BE REMOVED). But such a miraculous achievement demands the fulfillment of specific conditions, negative and positive.

**And does not doubt in his heart** - There must be no conflict between his outward assertion and his inner attitude. As discussed below in the parallel passage in James **doubt** pictures one's mind in dispute with itself; so that the person "doubting" in effect wavers between opposing outcomes, in one moment thinking that the petition will be granted but then giving sway to the [antithetical](#) thought that the request will not be granted.

**Robertson** on **doubt** - The verb [diakrino](#) means a divided judgment. Wavering doubt. (THE PRAYING PERSON SHOULD NOT HAVE) a single act of doubt (DOUBT IS IN THE [aorist tense](#) - ACTION AT A POINT IN TIME IN THE PAST), but continued faith.

In a passage presenting a similar truth James writes

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But (Term of contrast) he must ask in **faith** without any **doubting** (SAME COMBINATION AS IN Mk 11:23), for the **one who doubts** (continually - [present tense](#)) is like ([simile](#)) the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For ([term of explanation](#)) that man **ought not to expect** ([present imperative](#)) that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8being a double-minded ([dipsuchos](#) - "two minds"! man, unstable in all his ways. (Jas 1:5-8)

**Doubt** (1252)([diakrino](#) from **diá** = separation, "thoroughly back and forth" + **kríno** = decide, judge) literally means "to separate throughout", to judge "back and forth" between two options which can either (positively) refer to close-reasoning (discrimination) or negatively "over-judging" and thus vacillating or wavering as must be excluded in the prayer in this passage. vacillating). One author says diakrino is pictured by the idea of divided in one's mind. This person is the one who is vacillating between two opinions or decisions.

**But** - Term of contrast. Here **doubt** is clearly contrasted with belief. **Doubt** will "defuse" so to speak the efficacy of the request so that the request is ineffective.

**Believes** - **Believes** is [pisteuo](#) in the [present tense](#) denoting one's continuing attitude of trust that his petition will be granted. **Believes** is not believing one has enough faith (that is self-focused), but speaks of firm assurance and confidence in the One to

Whom the request is presented, i.e., God (that is God-focused). As Hiebert explains below, Jesus is not giving a "Name it, Claim it" formula for getting whatever one asks of God. An affirmative answer to the prayer is assured only if the request is in the will of God and for the glory of God. And I agree with Hiebert that this type of praying is intimately related to being saturated with God's Word (which gives us His will) and filled with the Spirit. A synonym (in my opinion) would be "praying in the Spirit." I love Spurgeon's prayer for this genre of praying. Indeed, may the prayer of the Prince of Preachers also be our frequent prayer so that our praying will avail much for the King and Kingdom...

**Lord, teach us to pray. Put the thoughts into our minds, the desires into our hearts, and the very words into our lips, if it be Your will, that so all through it we may be praying in the Spirit and not in the flesh.**

Related Resource:

- In depth discussion on Praying in the Spirit

**Hiebert** reiterates the qualifying statement regarding "mountain moving" praying writing that "Jesus set no limits to the possibilities of prayer, but such successful praying must have a true foundation. The one praying can only have such confidence if he is sure that what he is asking is **in harmony with the will of God** and **further His purpose**. Such confidence is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit through the Word."

**That what he says is going to happen** - In other words, the praying person is fully convinced that the request will be granted.

**it will be granted him** - It is granted because of the intimate union of our faith tapping into God's power.

We see similar truth taught in the OT and in other NT passages such as

Psalm 37:4+ Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart (BECAUSE WHEN YOU DELIGHT IN HIM, YOU ARE ABIDING IN HIM AND YOUR DESIRES BECOME "SYNCHRONIZED" WITH HIS DESIRES.)

John 14:13 "Whatever you ask in My name (ASKING EVEN AS "I JESUS" WOULD ASK!), that will I do, so that (NOTE THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THIS PRAYER IS THAT) the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you (NOTE THE TWO CONDITIONS), ask whatever you wish (BECAUSE WHAT YOU ASK WILL BE IN SYNCH WITH WHAT THE SON WOULD ASK AND WHAT THE WILL OF GOD IS IN THE WORD OF GOD), and it will be done for you.

**Akin** adds "**An important point of clarification**: True and believing prayer is not attempting to get God to change His will to fit our plans. It is a passionate pursuit to see God's plans accomplished in us! Prayer is not conjuring God up like some —genie in a bottle|| obligated to grant us whatever we wish. Read Matt 6:9-10; Mark 14:36; John 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:23-24; and 1 John 5:14-15 before you draw such a foolish and erroneous theological conclusion. Let Scripture interpret Scripture as you apply —the analogy of faith." Praying in faith with mountain moving faith, our God will give us what we need to glorify His name. Here is a —house of prayer|| you can bring your petitions to! In one of his hymns John Newton said it like this, —

Thou are coming to King!

Large petitions with thee bring!

For His grace and power are such—

none can ever ask too much!

(Be blessed by [Matt Foreman's beautiful vocal version](#) -

God enable us to make the entire hymn the prayer of our heart. In Jesus' Name. Amen)

So when we pray we trust not only His power to give us what we ask, but also in His wisdom to give us what we need! I trust Him enough to have Him say no and turn me down if that is what He chooses. That means —we may receive answers we do not want, find things we are not looking for, and have doors opened [and closed] we do not expect.|| (Garland, NIVAC, 449).

**Swete** "The Twelve were crossing the Mount of Olives; below them, between the mountains of Judaea and the mountains of Moab, lay the hollow of the Dead Sea. 'Faith, cooperating with the Divine Will, could fill yonder basin with the mass of limestone beneath their feet.' The metaphor was in use among the Rabbis.... Faith is regarded as the normal attitude of the heart (**ED: believes** in [present tense](#) = CONTINUALLY PRESENT IN ONE'S HEART) not a sudden emotion or isolated act. Faith contemplates the effect as potentially accompanying its exercise, though the actual fulfillment may be delayed."

**ILLUSTRATION - CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO WORLDS** - Once when the Cleveland Symphony was performing The Magic Flute by Mozart, an electrical storm caused the lights to go out. Undaunted by the difficulties, the members of the orchestra knew the music so well that they completed the performance in the dark. At the end of the performance, the audience burst into thunderous

applause, and a stagehand illuminated the orchestra and conductor with a flashlight so that they could take their bows. It is much the same in the spiritual realm. If you know the Master, you can play His music even in the dark. You can live a holy life in an unholy realm. When caught between two worlds, the secret is learning to see beyond the style of this world to the substance of the next. (Discipleship Journal, May/June 1987)

**PRAYER** - May our prayer daily be like the words of the devout Puritans in the [Valley of Vision](#) -

"If Thou seest in me any wrong thing encouraged, any evil desire cherished, any DELIGHT that is not Thy DELIGHT, any habit that grieves Thee, any nest of sin in my heart, then grant me the kiss of Thy forgiveness, and teach my feet to walk the way of Thy commandments. Produce in me self-despair that will make Jesus precious to me, DELIGHTFUL in all His offices, pleasurable in all His ways, and may I love His commands (delight yourself) as well as His promises (desire fulfilled). Give me the saving lamp of Thy Spirit that I may see Thee, the God of my salvation, the DELIGHT of my soul, rejoicing over me in love (Zeph 3:17+)." Amen

### **Take My Life and Let It Be**

Take my life and let it be,  
Consecrated Lord to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days  
And let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love  
Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee

Take my voice and let me sing  
Always, only for my King  
Take my lips and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee

Take my silver and my gold;  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect, and use  
Every power as Thou shalt choose,  
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine.  
It shall no be no longer mine.  
Take my heart, it is Thy own.  
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure-store.  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee,  
Ever, only, all for Thee.

**THOUGHT** - It is "easy" to sing these beautiful words of this prayer to God, but not so easy to follow up these words with the attitudes and actions about which we have just sung. The only way is by [depending on the Holy Spirit to carry through with what we have just offered to God](#). And while we will not achieve "perfection" in keeping our offerings to the Lord, it is not about perfection (that is called glorification) but it is about direction (steady, upward progressive sanctification) As an aside, if you are serious about this short life, this hymn would be a great prayer to offer up to the King! What do you do when you don't desire to delight in God? Clearly this is an important question so I would strongly encourage you to watch the 6 part series by Dr John Piper on what do I do... ["When I Don't Desire God"](#)

**THOUGHT** - What do you do when you don't desire to delight in God? Clearly this is an important question so I would strongly encourage you to watch the 6 part series by Dr



**Mark 11:23 - "Nothing Wavering"** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. James 1:6+.

The man who lacks wisdom is promised it, but he must ask in faith and not be like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Our Lord said we could move mountains if we commanded them to move and did not doubt in our hearts (Mk. 11:23). The positive side of that is in the next verse, which says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith." There we have the negative and positive again (Rom. 4:20). Some are saved from sin but not from staggering.

"Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Positive and negative! Are you walking by faith or wobbling in doubt? "We lie to God in prayer when we do not rely on God after prayer." James is very clear: "Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord."

Asking without believing marks a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (Vance Havner)

---

### **Togetherness - Selwyn Hughes**

I assure you: If anyone says to this mountain, "Be lifted up and thrown into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes ... it will be done for him.—MARK 11:23

Just as the deer's perfect correlation between its front and rear feet allows it to make its way swiftly and safely to the mountaintop, so the Christian who has perfect coordination between the head and heart will rise to new heights with God. For you see, unless a person's head and heart are properly coordinated and move purposefully together, it is possible to miss one's step on the steep slopes of Christian experience and become a spiritual casualty.

I have known many Christians in my time who, because they lack coordination between what they ask for with their lips and what they want deep down in their hearts, stay in the same place spiritually year after year. They are not bad people; they just lack the spiritual coordination of the mature Christian, and thus they never know what it is to ascend into the mountain peaks with God.

Perhaps nowhere in Scripture is this truth more clearly portrayed than in the verse before us today. We are told that things happen in the spiritual realm when there is perfect coordination between what we ask for and what we believe. When our mind and our heart are in alignment, when they track together with the sure-footedness of a mountain deer, then nothing shall be impossible to us. How many of us, I wonder, miss our step on the slopes of the Christian life because our hearts and minds are not properly and perfectly coordinated?

Prayer Gracious and loving Heavenly Father, slowly I am beginning to see the truth that underlies Your promise to make my feet like deers' feet. Show me how to be as coordinated in the spiritual realm as the deer is in the natural realm. Amen (Every Day with Jesus)

---

### **MARK 11:23–24—Did Jesus promise to give literally anything we ask in faith? - Norman Geisler (When Critics Ask)**

**PROBLEM:** On the face of it, this verse seems to be saying that God will grant any request we make of Him as long as we believe. On the other hand, Paul asked God three times to be relieved of his thorn in the flesh, and God refused (2 Cor. 12:8–9)

**SOLUTION:** There are limitations on what God will give, indicated both by the context and by other texts, as well as by the laws of God's own nature and the universe.

First of all, God cannot literally give us anything. Some things are actually impossible. For example, God cannot grant a request of a creature to be God. Neither can He answer a request to approve of our sin. God will not give us a stone if we ask for bread, nor will He give us a serpent if we ask for fish (cf. Matt. 7:9–10).

Second, the context of Jesus' promise in Mark 11 indicates that it was not unconditional, for the very next verse says "If you ... forgive" your brother then God will forgive your trespasses. Thus, there is no reason to believe that Jesus intended us to take His promise to give us "whatever things" we ask without any conditions.

Third, all difficult passages should be interpreted in harmony with other clear statements of Scripture. And it is clear that God does not promise, for example, to heal everyone for whom we pray in faith. Paul wasn't healed, though he prayed earnestly and faithfully (2 Cor. 12:8–9). Jesus taught that it was not the blind man's lack of faith that hindered his being healed. Rather, he was born blind "that the works of God should be revealed in him" (John 9:3). In spite of the Apostle Paul's divine ability to heal others (Acts 28:9), later he apparently could not heal either Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25ff) or Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20). It clearly was not unbelief that

brought Job's sickness on him (Job 1:1). What is more, if faith of the recipient were the condition for receiving a miracle, then none of the dead Jesus raised would have come back to life, since the dead cannot believe!

Finally, when the rest of Scripture is taken into consideration there are many conditions placed on God's promise to answer prayer in addition to faith. We must "abide in Him" and let His Word "abide in us" (John 15:7). We cannot "ask amiss" out of our own selfishness (James 4:3). Furthermore, we must ask "according to His will" (1 John 5:14). Even Jesus prayed, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup [His death] pass from Me" (Matt. 26:39). Indeed, on all except God's unconditional promises, this "if it be your will" must always be stated or implied. For prayer is not a means by which God serves us. Rather, it is a means by which we serve God. Prayer is not a means by which we get our will done in heaven, but a means by which God gets His will done on earth.

---

**"Nothing Wavering"** And shall not doubt in his heart. Mark 11:23. Doubting nothing. Acts 10:20. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. James 1:6+. It is a powerful phrase, and the word shows up elsewhere (Mt. 21:21; Rom. 4:20; 14:23). A. T. Robertson says, "It is a vivid picture of internal doubt." We must not only believe God, we must believe we believe God. Like the silly habit of going back to see whether you really did lock that door, an unsettled state of spiritual indecision is developed by doubting souls. They never "close the gate" behind them, they are forever reconsidering their decisions. They are never sure of their conversion or their consecration. They are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. When you have made any covenant with the Lord consider it final. If you did it honestly in the light you had you insult Him and your own intelligence by going over it all again. It becomes a vicious habit, and you can never be sure of anything. You never stand firmly on any point for fear you may be wrong. Close your gates behind you and move on, "nothing doubting," "for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." (Vance Havner)

---

**Matthew 11:23 - Got Any Mountains?** Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Mark 11:23. Can we confidently claim and expect the conversion of our loved ones? Well, it must be in God's will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (Jn. 5:14). Does He will the conversion of every one? "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pt. 3:9). Then He will remove this mountain, but we must expect the mountain to move. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mt. 21:22). And the verse following our text says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." We pray hoping, but hoping is not faith. Faith takes God's word for the deed and in its geography lists the mountain as "disappeared." Got any mountains you think are unsinkable? (Vance Havner)

---

Martin Luther said, "Faith alone which commits itself to God can sing the song of triumph before the victory, and raise the shout of joy before help has been obtained."

---

### **Faith Moves Mountains?**

Of these sayings, or varieties of an original saying, emphasizing the limitless possibilities open to faith, Mark's form (followed in Mt 21:21) has a life setting in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, during Holy Week; Luke's form may be from the Q collection, in which case the form in Matthew 17:20 (an amplification of Jesus' words to the disciples after the healing of the epileptic boy at the foot of the mountain of transfiguration) combines features from Mark and Q.

In any case, Jesus illustrates the power of faith by analogies from the natural world. If faith is present at all, even if it is no bigger than a mustard seed, it can accomplish wonders: think what a large plant springs from something as tiny as a mustard seed. "We are not afraid when the earth heaves and the mountains are hurled into the sea"—so Psalm 46:2 (NEB) describes a convulsion of nature that leaves men and women of God unshaken because he is their refuge and strength. It may be that Jesus is using such a form of words figuratively to describe the incalculable effects of prevailing faith.

But in Mark's account there may be some more explicit point in the form of words. In that account the words are addressed to the disciples after the incident of the cursing of the fig tree. There may not seem to be much to connect that incident with a lesson on the power of faith. The connection, however, may be provided by the place where, according to Mark, the words were spoken. They were spoken in the morning, as Jesus and his disciples made their way from Bethany to Jerusalem, crossing the Mount of Olives. So, in Mark's account, "this mountain" in the saying would be the Mount of Olives.

Now, in current expectation regarding the time of the end, the Mount of Olives played a special part. It would be the scene of a violent earthquake on the day of the Lord. "On that day," said one of the prophets (referring to the day when the God of Israel would take final action against the enemies of his people), "his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south"

(Zech 14:4). If Jesus had this and related Old Testament prophecies in mind on his way across the Mount of Olives, his meaning might have been, "If you have sufficient faith in God, the day of the Lord will come sooner than you think." (Walter Kaiser, et al - Hard Sayings of the Bible)

---

**Mark 11:23 - Better Than Moving Mountains** - Mountains were once regarded as symbols of the steadfast and unmovable, but not any more. With his monster bulldozers, man can level peaks into plains. But, great as are his feats in moving the mountains of earth, he is not doing too well in the realm of the spirit. There he is playing with molehills.

Our Lord would have us see miracles in mountain-moving. He said: "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:23). Evidently our Lord expected believing prayer to do wonders. Moving a mountain is a mighty feat, any way you look at it.

We glory in what our machines can do but the church sits today before a range of obstacles and studies ways to tunnel through or climb over or detour around. It does not seem to occur to some of the brethren that there is another way to clear a path—by faith and prayer. Of course the collective body of believers fails because we fail as individuals. Have you come to a halt before a forbidding wall? Have you become reconciled to limitations that could be removed? Are you studying ways to circumvent the mountain when God says you can consign it to the sea? At any rate, we are trying to drill our way through by clever ingenuity or climb over by sheer determination or go around by dodging the issue. It is time for a miracle. One sits in religious gatherings and hears all kinds of clever schemes for moving mountains with ecclesiastical machinery. He hears little about going to our knees in prevailing prayer. We pay respect to prayer and coin pious phrases about faith, but the mountains are not moving. If only some of our convocations would turn in desperation to the Saviour's formula!

The history of the church abounds in records of mountain-movers who faced the impossible and ordered the mountain into the sea. They did not accomplish it with bulldozers. The weapons of their warfare were not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

Having said all this, let me remind you that, wonderful as moving mountains may be, it is not the supreme accomplishment. "... though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing" (I Corinthians 13:2). We Americans glory in the spectacular and sensational but there is something better than getting into headlines, even because of mighty faith. The greatest mountain-mover, without love, is nothing. Here is another scale of values. The manifestations of love outlined in I Corinthians 13 sound very homely: Love is longsuffering, kind, does not envy, is not proud; love behaves itself, is not easily provoked, not self-seeking, keeps no account of evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but in the truth; love bears all things, believes, hopes, endures all things. These are plain virtues the lowliest may practice in the home, the shop, at work or play. Love looks commonplace beside throwing mountains into the sea, but it rates high with God. One may do both of course, but we are suffering most today not so much from the presence of mountains that ought to be moved as from the absence of love that ought to be manifested. Our Saviour wrought miracles, but what means most to us today is His love. His love shed abroad in our hearts will mean more than all the mountains we move. (Vance Havner)

---

### **The Sea and the Mountains - Henry Morris**

"For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:23).

On the third day of redemption week, the sight of the withered fig tree led to an instructive lesson on faith in God, the Lord Jesus assuring the disciples that real faith could even move mountains into the sea. In parallel, on the third day of creation week, He had literally called the mountains up out of the sea (Gen. 1:9-10)!

It was also on this day that the Lord had to severely rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees, beginning with two parables about a vineyard (Matt. 21:28-43). He reminded them that they had been placed in charge of God's vineyard on the earth, and had failed. Like the fig tree, there was no fruit for God from their service, and they must be removed.

Likewise, on day three of creation, the entire earth had been prepared as a beautiful garden, with an abundance of fruit to nourish every living creature (Gen. 1:11-12). It has been placed in man's care (Gen. 1:28-30; 2:15), but he has failed. Before the earth can become a beautiful garden again (Rev. 22:2), it must be purged, and the faithless keepers of the vineyard banished.

This third day of Passion Week was climaxed with His great discourse on the Mount of Olives, in which the Lord promised He would come again some day in power and great glory (Matt. 24). It was appropriate that He should then spend the night with His disciples there on the mountain, for the mount would call to memory that far-off third day of creation week when He had drawn all the

mountains out of the sea. Also, the little Garden of Gethsemane—on its slope—would bring to mind the beautiful Garden of Eden and the verdant world He had planted everywhere that same day. Now, because of what He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem, the ground would some day be cleansed of its Curse and the world made new again. (Days to Remember)

**Mark 11:24** "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

- What: Mt 7:7-11 18:19 21:22 Lu 11:9-13 18:1-8 Joh 14:13 15:7 Joh 16:23-27 Jas 1:5,6 5:15-18 1Jn 3:22 5:14,15
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage

Matthew 21:22 "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

1 John 5:14-15+ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

[See also the passages quoted above](#) which relate to praying in the will of God.

**Therefore** - "The word "faith," **therefore**, indicates the logical connection between the contents of verse 23 and this verse. The idea is that since faith is the criterion of success in spiritual matters, **therefore** faith should be the constant attitude of the mind when one prays." (Wuest)

**I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask** - See the comments above on the qualifying aspects of this prayer.

Hiebert says "pray and ask for, both present tenses, picture the practice. Pray suggests reverential communion with God as the giver of the answer, while ask for, in the middle voice, points to the personal interest of the petitioner in his request. All things sets no limits to the requests, but they must be in harmony with the purpose of God." (Hiebert)

**Sproul:** We have to be very careful with this verse. A whole theology based almost exclusively on this text has permeated the Christian world in our day. [The word of faith movement](#), which espouses the idea of "**name it and claim it**," tells us that all we have to do to receive something we want is to claim it as ours in Jesus' name, and it will be ours. This movement is, in some ways, the Christian parallel to the New Age movement in the secular world. The New Age movement teaches that by visualizing what we want to happen, we can actually change the world around us. The force that is at the bottom of the New Age thinking is really magic . ([Is the Word of Faith movement biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#))

**Believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you** - applying the sweeping assurance of the previous verse to the disciples. **Received** is the aorist tense, "did receive," and stresses that faith accepts that the petition has already been granted (cf. 1 John 5:14–15+). Knowing that the petition is in God's will, faith accepts the answer as **granted**, although the actual bestowal is future, "ye shall have them." "

To faith God's promise is as good as His performance, and so the believing soul enjoys the answer before it arrives.

-- Scroggie

**Robertson says:** "That is the test of faith, the kind that sees the fulfillment before it happens."

**Wuest** says "'**Faith is the title deed of things hoped for** (Heb. 11:1+)." Just as a title deed guarantees to the one whose name appears on it, the ownership of the property, even though he may not have it in his actual possession, so faith is the title deed that guarantees to the one exercising it, the answer to his prayer, even though that answer may be delayed, and the thing asked for is not in his possession. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Spurgeon** - If you look at it carefully, I think you will perceive the essential qualities which are necessary to any great success and prevalence in prayer. According to our Saviour's description of prayer, there should always be some definite objects for which we should plead. He speaks of things—"what things soever ye desire." It seems then that he did not put it that God's children would go to him to pray when they have nothing to pray for. Another essential qualification of prayer is earnest desire; for the Master supposes here that when we pray we have desires. Indeed it is not prayer, it may be something like prayer, the outward form or the bare skeleton, but it is not the living thing, the all-prevailing, almighty thing, called prayer, unless there be a fulness and overflowing of desires. Observe, too, that faith is an essential quality of successful prayer—"believe that ye receive them." Ye cannot pray so as to be heard in heaven and answered to your soul's satisfaction, unless you believe that God really hears and will answer you. One

other qualification appears here upon the very surface, namely, that a realizing expectation should always go with a firm faith—"believe that ye receive them." Not merely believe that "ye shall" but believe that "ye do" receive them—count them as if they were received, reckon them as if you had them already, and act as if you had them—act as if you were sure you should have them—"believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." **Let us review these four qualities, one by one.** (For Spurgeon's review of these qualities read the sermon that you might be enabled and encouraged to pray with power and persistence [Mark 11:24 The True Prayer--True Power!](#))

**Spurgeon** - Allow me to quote what an old preacher said upon the subject of prayer, and give it to you as a little word of advice—"Remember, the Lord will not hear thee, because of the arithmetic of thy prayers; he does not count their numbers. He will not hear thee because of the rhetoric of thy prayers; he does not care for the eloquent language in which they are conveyed. He will not listen to thee because of the geometry of thy prayers; he does not compute them by their length, or by their breadth. He will not regard thee because of the music of thy prayers; he doth not care for sweet voices, nor for harmonious periods. Neither will he look at thee because of the logic of thy prayers, or because they are well arranged. But he will hear thee, and he will measure the amount of the blessing he will give thee, according to the divinity of thy prayers. If thou canst plead the person of Christ, and if the Holy Ghost inspire thee with zeal and earnestness, the blessings which thou shalt ask, shall surely come unto thee." Brethren, I would like to burn the whole stock of old prayers that we have been using this fifty years. That "oil that goes from vessel to vessel,"—that "horse that rushes into the battle,"—that misquoted mangled text, "where two or three are met together, thou wilt be in the midst of them, and that to bless them," and all those other quotations which we have been manufacturing, and dislocating, and copying from man to man. I would that we came to speak to God, just out of our own hearts. It would be a grand thing for our prayer meetings.

---

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Colossians 1:9 Commentary](#)
  - [Colossians 4:12 Commentary](#)
  - [Devotional on Prayer](#)
  - [Guide to Praying for Missionaries](#)
  - [Philippians 4:6 Commentary](#)
  - [Pithy Prayer Phrases](#)
  - [Prayer - Greek Words for Prayer](#)
  - [Prayer Devotionals and Illustrations](#)
  - [Prayer Hymns and Poems](#)
  - [Prayer Quotes](#)
  - [Prayer Quotes, Devotionals and Illustrations](#)
  - [Praying for People from Every Tribe, Tongue, People and Nation](#)
  - [Praying His Word](#)
  - [Praying in the Spirit](#)
  - [Spurgeon's Gems on Prayer](#)
- 

#### **[Andrew Murray - With Christ in the School of Prayer-](#)**

##### **ELEVENTH LESSON "Believe that ye have received;" or, The Faith that Takes**

Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.—MARK 11:24.

WHAT a promise! so large, so Divine, that our little hearts cannot take it in, and in every possible way seek to limit it to what we think safe or probable; instead of allowing it, in its quickening power and energy, just as He gave it, to enter in, and to enlarge our hearts to the measure of what His love and power are really ready to do for us. Faith is very far from being a mere conviction of the truth of God's word, or a conclusion drawn from certain premises. It is the ear which has heard God say what He will do, the eye which has seen Him doing it, and, therefore, where there is true faith, it is impossible but the answer must come. If we only see to it that we do the one thing that He asks of us as we pray: BELIEVE that ye have received; He will see to it that He does the thing He has promised: "Ye shall have them." The key-note of Solomon's prayer (2 Chron. 6:4), "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath with His hands fulfilled that which He spake with His mouth to my father David," is the key-note of all true prayer: the joyful adoration of a God whose hand always secures the fulfilment of what His mouth hath spoken. Let us in this spirit listen to the promise Jesus gives; each part of it has its Divine message.

"All things whatsoever." At this first word our human wisdom at once begins to doubt and ask: This surely cannot be literally true? But if it be not, why did the Master speak it, using the very strongest expression He could find: "All things whatsoever." And it is not as if

this were the only time He spoke thus; is it not He who also said, "If thou canst believe, ALL THINGS are possible to him that believeth;" "If ye have faith, NOTHING shall be impossible to you." Faith is so wholly the work of God's Spirit through His word in the prepared heart of the believing disciple, that it is impossible that the fulfilment should not come; faith is the pledge and forerunner of the coming answer. Yes, "ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye receive." The tendency of human reason is to interpose here, and with certain qualifying clauses, "if expedient," "if according to God's will," to break the force of a statement which appears dangerous. O let us beware of dealing thus with the Master's words. His promise is most literally true. He wants His oft-repeated "ALL THINGS" to enter into our hearts, and reveal to us how mighty the power of faith is, how truly the Head calls the members to share with Him in His power, how wholly our Father places His power at the disposal of the child that wholly trusts Him. In this "all things" faith is to have its food and strength: as we weaken it we weaken faith. The WHATSOEVER is unconditional: the only condition is what is implied in the believing. Ere we can believe we must find out and know what God's will is; believing is the exercise of a soul surrendered and given up to the influence of the Word and the Spirit; but when once we do believe nothing shall be impossible. God forbid that we should try and bring down His ALL THINGS to the level of what we think possible. Let us now simply take Christ's "WHATSOEVER" as the measure and the hope of our faith: it is a seed-word which, if taken just as He gives it, and kept in the heart, will unfold itself and strike root, fill our life with its fullness, and bring forth fruit abundantly.

"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for." It is in prayer that these "all things" are to be brought to God, to be asked and received of Him. The faith that receives them is the fruit of the prayer. In one aspect there must be faith before there can be prayer; in another the faith is the outcome and the growth of prayer. It is in the personal presence of the Saviour, in intercourse with Him, that faith rises to grasp what at first appeared too high. It is in prayer that we hold up our desire to the light of God's Holy Will, that our motives are tested, and proof given whether we ask indeed in the name of Jesus, and only for the glory of God. It is in prayer that we wait for the leading of the Spirit to show us whether we are asking the right thing and in the right spirit. It is in prayer that we become conscious of our want of faith, that we are led on to say to the Father that we do believe, and that we prove the reality of our faith by the confidence with which we persevere. It is in prayer that Jesus teaches and inspires faith. He that waits to pray, or loses heart in prayer, because he does not yet feel the faith needed to get the answer, will never learn to believe. He who begins to pray and ask will find the Spirit of faith is given nowhere so surely as at the foot of the Throne.

"Believe that ye have received." It is clear that what we are to believe is, that we receive the very things we ask. The Saviour does not hint that because the Father knows what is best He may give us something else. The very mountain faith bids depart is cast into the sea. There is a prayer in which, in everything, we make known our requests with prayer and supplication, and the reward is the sweet peace of God keeping heart and mind. This is the prayer of trust. It has reference to things of which we cannot find out if God is going to give them. As children we make known our desires in the countless things of daily life, and leave it to the Father to give or not as He thinks best. But the prayer of faith of which Jesus speaks is something different, something higher. When, whether in the greater interests of the Master's work, or in the lesser concerns of our daily life, the soul is led to see how there is nothing that so honors the Father as the faith that is assured that He will do what He has said in giving us whatsoever we ask for, and takes its stand on the promise as brought home by the Spirit, it may know most certainly that it does receive exactly what it asks. Just see how clearly the Lord sets this before us in verse 23: "Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it." This is the blessing of the prayer of faith of which Jesus speaks.

"Believe that ye have received." This is the word of central importance, of which the meaning is too often misunderstood. Believe that you have received! now, while praying, the thing you ask for. It may only be later that you shall have it in personal experience, that you shall see what you believe; but now, without seeing, you are to believe that it has been given you of the Father in heaven. The receiving or accepting of an answer to prayer is just like the receiving or accepting of Jesus or of pardon, a spiritual thing, an act of faith apart from all feeling. When I come as a suppliant for pardon, I believe that Jesus in heaven is for me, and so I receive or take Him. When I come as a suppliant for any special gift, which is according to God's word, I believe that what I ask is given me: I believe that I have it, I hold it in faith; I thank God that it is mine. "If we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him."

"And ye shall have them." That is, the gift which we first hold in faith as bestowed upon us in heaven will also become ours in personal experience. But will it be needful to pray longer if once we know we have been heard and have received what we asked? There are cases in which such prayer will not be needful, in which the blessing is ready to break through at once, if we but hold fast our confidence, and prove our faith by praising for what we have received, in the face of our not yet having it in experience. There are other cases in which the faith that has received needs to be still further tried and strengthened in persevering prayer. God only knows when everything in and around us is fully ripe for the manifestation of the blessing that has been given to faith. Elijah knew for certain that rain would come; God had promised it; and yet he had to pray the seven times. And that prayer was no show or play; an intense spiritual reality in the heart of him who lay pleading there, and in the heaven above where it had its effectual work to do. It is "through faith and patience we inherit the promises." Faith says most confidently, I have received it. Patience perseveres in prayer until the gift bestowed in heaven is seen on earth. "Believe that ye have received, and ye shall have." Between the have received in heaven, and the shall have of earth, believe; believing praise and prayer is the link.



And now, remember one thing more: It is Jesus who said this. As we see heaven thus opened to us, and the Father on the Throne offering to give us whatsoever we ask in faith, our hearts feel full of shame that we have so little availed ourselves of our privilege, and full of fear lest our feeble faith still fail to grasp what is so clearly placed within our reach. There is one thing must make us strong and full of hope: it is Jesus who has brought us this message from the Father. He Himself, when He was on earth, lived the life of faith and prayer. It was when the disciples expressed their surprise at what He had done to the fig-tree, that He told them that the very same life He led could be theirs; that they could not only command the fig-tree, but the very mountain, and it must obey. And He is our life: all He was on earth He is in us now; all He teaches He really gives. He is Himself the Author and the Perfecter of our faith: He gives the spirit of faith; let us not be afraid that such faith is not meant for us. It is meant for every child of the Father; it is within reach of each one who will but be childlike, yielding himself to the Father's Will and Love, trusting the Father's Word and Power. Dear fellow-Christian! let the thought that this word comes through Jesus, the Son, our Brother, give us courage, and let our answer be: Yea, Blessed Lord, we do believe Thy Word, we do believe that we receive.

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY."

Blessed Lord! Thou didst come from the Father to show us all His Love, and all the treasures of blessing that Love is waiting to bestow. Lord! Thou hast this day again flung the gate so wide open, and given us such promises as to our liberty in prayer, that we must blush that our poor hearts have so little taken it in. Is has been too large for us to believe.

Lord! we now look up to Thee to teach us to take and keep and use this precious word of Thine: "All things whatsoever ye ask, believe that ye have received." Blessed Jesus! it is Thyself in whom our faith must be rooted if it is to grow strong. Thy work has freed us wholly from the power of sin, and opened the way to the Father; Thy Love is ever longing to bring us into the full fellowship of Thy glory and power; Thy Spirit is ever drawing us upward into a life of perfect faith and confidence; we are assured that in Thy teaching we shall learn to pray the prayer of faith. Thou wilt train us to pray so that we believe that we receive, to believe that we really have what we ask. Lord! teach me so to know and trust and love Thee, so to live and abide in Thee, that all my prayers rise up and come before God in Thee, and that my soul may have in Thee the assurance that I am heard. Amen.

#### **TWELFTH LESSON "Have faith in God;" or, The Secret of Believing Prayer**

Jesus, answering, said unto them, HAVE FAITH IN GOD. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what He saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.—MARK 11:22–24.

THE promise of answer to prayer which formed our yesterday's lesson is one of the most wonderful in all Scripture. In how many hearts it has raised the question, How ever can I attain the faith that knows that it receives all it asks?

It is this question our Lord would answer to-day. Ere He gave that wonderful promise to His disciples, He spoke another word, in which He points out where the faith in the answer to prayer takes its rise, and ever finds its strength. HAVE FAITH IN GOD: this word precedes the other, Have faith in the promise of an answer to prayer. The power to believe a promise depends entirely, but only, on faith in the promiser. Trust in the person begets trust in his word. It is only where we live and associate with God in personal, loving intercourse, where GOD HIMSELF is all to us, where our whole being is continually opened up and exposed to the mighty influences that are at work where His Holy Presence is revealed, that the capacity will be developed for believing that He gives whatever we ask.

This connection between faith in God and faith in His promise will become clear to us if we think what faith really is. It is often compared to the hand or the mouth, by which we take and appropriate what is offered to us. But it is of importance that we should understand that faith is also the ear by which I hear what is promised, the eye by which I see what is offered me. On this the power to take depends. I must hear the person who gives me the promise: the very tone of his voice gives me courage to believe. I must see him: in the light of his eye and countenance all fear as to my right to take passes away. The value of the promise depends on the promiser: it is on my knowledge of what the promiser is that faith in the promise depends.

It is for this reason that Jesus, ere He gives that wonderful prayer-promise, first says, "HAVE FAITH IN GOD." That is, let thine eye be open to the Living God, and gaze on Him, seeing Him who is Invisible. It is through the eye that I yield myself to the influence of what is before me; I just allow it to enter, to exert its influence, to leave its impression upon my mind. So believing God is just looking to God and what He is, allowing Him to reveal His presence, giving Him time and yielding the whole being to take in the full impression of what He is as God, the soul opened up to receive and rejoice in the overshadowing of His love. Yes, faith is the eye to which God shows what He is and does; through faith the light of His presence and the workings of His mighty power stream into the soul. As that which I see lives in me, so by faith God lives in me, too.

And even so faith is also the ear through which the voice of God is always heard and intercourse with Him kept up. It is through the Holy Spirit the Father speaks to us; the Son is the Word, the substance of what God says; the Spirit is the living voice. This the child

of God needs to lead and guide him; the secret voice from heaven must teach him, as it taught Jesus, what to say and what to do. An ear opened toward God, that is, a believing heart waiting on Him to hear what He says, will hear Him speak. The words of God will not only be the words of a Book, but, proceeding from the mouth of God, they will be spirit and truth, life and power. They will bring in deed and living experience what are otherwise only thoughts. Through this opened ear the soul tarries under the influence of the life and power of God Himself. As the words I hear enter the mind and dwell and work there, so through faith God enters the heart, and dwells and works there.

When faith now is in full exercise as eye and ear, as the faculty of the soul by which we see and hear God, then it will be able to exercise its full power as hand and mouth, by which we appropriate God and His blessings. The power of reception will depend entirely on the power of spiritual perception. For this reason Jesus said, ere He gave the promise that God would answer believing prayer, "HAVE FAITH IN GOD." Faith is simply surrender: I yield myself to the impression the tidings I hear make on me. By faith I yield myself to the living God. His glory and love fill my heart, and have the mastery over my life. Faith is fellowship; I give myself up to the influence of the friend who makes me a promise, and become linked to him by it. And it is when we enter into this living fellowship with God Himself, in a faith that always sees and hears Him, that it becomes easy and natural to believe His promise as to prayer. Faith in the promise is the fruit of faith in the promiser; the prayer of faith is rooted in the life of faith. And in this way the faith that prays effectually is indeed a gift of God. Not as something that He bestows or infuses at once, but in a far deeper and truer sense, as the blessed disposition or habit of soul which is wrought and grows up in us in a life of intercourse with Him. Surely for one who knows his Father well, and lives in constant close intercourse with Him, it is a simple thing to believe the promise that He will do the will of His child who lives in union with Himself.

It is because very many of God's children do not understand this connection between the life of faith and the prayer of faith that their experience of the power of prayer is so limited. When they desire earnestly to obtain an answer from God, they fix their whole heart upon the promise, and try their utmost to grasp that promise in faith. When they do not succeed, they are ready to give up hope; the promise is true, but it is beyond their power for take hold of it in faith. Listen to the lesson Jesus teaches us this day: HAVE FAITH IN GOD, the Living God; let faith look to God more than the thing promised; it is His love, His power, His living presence will waken and work the faith. A physician would say to one asking for some means to get more strength in his arms and hands to seize and hold, that his whole constitution must be built up and strengthened. So the cure of a feeble faith is alone to be found in the invigoration of our whole spiritual life by intercourse with God. Learn to believe in God, to take hold of God, to let God take possession of thy life, and it will be easy to take hold of the promise. He that knows and trusts God finds it easy to trust the promise, too.

Just note how distinctly this comes out in the saints of old. Every special exhibition of the power of faith was the fruit of a special revelation of God. See it in Abraham: "And the word of the Lord came unto Abram, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield. And He brought him forth abroad, and said ... AND HE BELIEVED THE LORD." And later again: "The Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, I am God Almighty. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold my covenant is with thee." It was the revelation of God Himself that gave the promise its living power to enter the heart and work the faith. Because they knew God these men of faith could not do anything but trust His promise. God's promise will be to us what God Himself is. It is the man who walks before the Lord, and falls upon his face to listen while the living God speaks to him, who will really receive the promise. Though we have God's promises in the Bible, with full liberty to take them, the spiritual power is wanting, except as God Himself speaks them to us. And He speaks to those who walk and live with Him. Therefore, HAVE FAITH IN GOD: let faith be all eye and ear, the surrender to let God make His full impression, and reveal Himself fully in the soul. Count it one of the chief blessings of prayer to exercise faith in God, as the Living Mighty God, who waits to fulfill in us all the good pleasure of His will, and the work of faith with power. See in Him the God of Love, whose delight it is to bless and impart Himself. In such worship of faith in God the power will speedily come to believe the promise, too: ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE ASK, BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE." Yes, see that thou dost in faith make God thine own; the promise will be thine, too.

Precious lesson that Jesus has to teach us this day. We seek God's gifts; God wants to give us HIMSELF first. We think of prayer as the power to draw down good gifts from heaven; Jesus as the means to draw ourselves up to God. We want to stand at the door and cry: Jesus would have us first enter in and realize that we are friends and children. Let us accept the teaching. Let every experience of the littleness of our faith in prayer urge us first to have and exercise more faith in the living God, and in such faith to yield ourselves to Him. A heart full of God has power for the prayer of faith. Faith in God begets faith in the promise, in the promise too of an answer to prayer.

Therefore, child of God, take time, take time, to bow before Him, to wait on Him to reveal Himself. Take time, and let thy soul in holy awe and worship exercise and express its faith in the Infinite One, and as He imparts Himself and takes possession of thee the prayer of faith will crown thy faith in God.

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY."

O my God! I do believe in Thee. I believe in Thee as the Father, Infinite in Thy Love and Power. And as the Son, my Redeemer and

my Life. And as the Holy Spirit, Comforter and Guide and Strength. Three-One God, I have faith in Thee. I know and am sure that all that Thou art Thou art to me, that all Thou hast promised Thou wilt perform.

Lord Jesus! increase this faith. Teach me to take time, and wait and worship in the Holy Presence until my faith takes in all there is in God for me. Let it see Him as the Fountain of all Life, working with Almighty Strength to accomplish His will on the world and in me. Let it see Him in His Love longing to meet and fulfil my desires. Let it so take possession of my heart and life that through faith God alone may dwell there. Lord Jesus, help me! with my whole heart would I believe in God. Let faith in God each moment fill me.

O my Blessed Saviour! how can Thy Church glorify Thee, how can it fulfil that work of intercession through which Thy kingdom must come, unless our whole life be FAITH IN GOD. Blessed Lord! speak Thy Word, "HAVE FAITH IN GOD," into the depths of our souls. Amen. ([Andrew Murray - With Christ in the School of Prayer](#))

---

**Mark 11:24 - CARRY YOUR UMBRELLA!** And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matthew 21:22.

When it comes to praying in faith, most of us pray for rain but do not carry our umbrellas. We do not expect the answer according to Mark 11:24. One great Bible teacher was for a while perplexed by the grammar of that verse, "Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." But finally he stopped worrying about the grammar and believed God! The mountain moves when we ask in faith (Matthew 21:21). "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). Carry your umbrella! (Vance Havner)

---

### **KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM**

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.... James 1:5.

If you lack knowledge, go to school. If you lack wisdom, get on your knees! Knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge. One may have loads of learned lumber in his head and not know what or how to build with it. Wisdom is the gift of God. He is not stingy. But we must ask in faith, not wavering, for then we are like tossing waves of the sea, unstable in all our ways. What we ask for we must believe we receive and we shall have, not hoping but believing (see Mark 11:24; Matthew 21:22). (Vance Havner)

---

### **In the Father's Hands - Mark 11:24 - J Oswald Sanders**

We can be assured that we will receive all that God is willing to consistently grant us when we have prayed the prayer of faith in accordance with Mark 11:24. We can rest assured that He will exercise His divine influence on those who are the subjects of our prayers. He will do this to the fullest possible extent, short of encroaching on their free wills, so as to enable them to come to Christ or to otherwise conform to His will. We can be sure that He will choose the best time and employ the best methods to make His influence felt.

But what if the prayer does not seem to be answered, in spite of the sincerity of our desires and the earnestness of our pleas? Some light is thrown on our perplexity by the fact that our Lord Himself had to face the same problem. He did not

see His heart's desire for humanity realized in every case. There were those over whom He had to utter the lament of unfulfilled love: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34). And on another occasion He had to mourn, "You refuse to come to me to have life" (John 5:40).

No accusation about failure in prayer or about lack of true concern for the people being prayed for could be laid at His door, as it can all too often be laid at ours. But in spite of this, sometimes His prayers were not answered immediately or in the way we would expect. Yet He refused to exercise His divine power in order to compel people to come to Him. This is what is involved in the solemn responsibility of being human. We can say no to God.

However, this did not discourage Jesus from praying. He recognized the solemn fact, as we must, that in the final analysis the human will can become so debased that it can thwart the loving desires of God's heart. In the face of those circumstances, He did what we must do. He prayed and trustingly left the issue in the hands of His Father. (PP)

---

**Streams in the Desert** - Mark 11:24 - WHEN there is a matter that requires definite prayer, pray till you believe God, until with unfeigned lips you can thank Him for the answer. If the answer still carries outwardly, do not pray for it in such a way that it is evident that you are not definitely believing for it. Such a prayer in place of being a help will be a hindrance; and when you are finished praying, you will find that your faith has weakened or has entirely gone. The urgency that you felt to offer this kind of prayer is clearly from self and Satan. It may not be wrong to mention the matter in question to the Lord again, if He is keeping you waiting, but be

sure you do so in such a way that it implies faith. Do not pray yourself out of faith. You may tell Him that you are waiting and that you are still believing Him and therefore praise Him for the answer. There is nothing that so fully clinches faith as to be so sure of the answer that you can thank God for it. Prayers that pray us out of faith deny both God's promise in His Word and also His whisper "Yes," that He gave us in our hearts. Such prayers are but the expression of the unrest of one's heart, and unrest implies unbelief in reference to the answer to prayer. "For we which have believed do enter into rest" (Heb. 4:3). This prayer that prays ourselves out of faith frequently arises from centering our thoughts on the difficulty rather than on God's promise. Abraham "considered not his own body," "he staggered not at the promise of God" (Rom. 4:19, Rom. 4:20). May we watch and pray that we enter not into temptation of praying ourselves out of faith.—C. H. P.

Faith is not a sense, nor sight, nor reason, but a taking God at His Word.—Evans.

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.—George Mueller.

You will never learn faith in comfortable surroundings. God gives us the promises in a quiet hour; God seals our covenants with great and gracious words, then He steps back and waits to see how much we believe; then He lets the tempter come, and the test seems to contradict all that He has spoken. It is then that faith wins its crown. That is the time to look up through the storm, and among the trembling, frightened seamen cry, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me."

"Believe and trust; through stars and suns,  
Through life and death, through soul and sense,  
His wise, paternal purpose runs;  
The darkness of His Providence  
Is starlit with Divine intents."

WHEN my little son was about ten years of age, his grandmother promised him a stamp album for Christmas. Christmas came, but no stamp album, and no word from grandmother. The matter, however, was not mentioned; but when his playmates came to see his Christmas presents, I was astonished, after he had named over this and that as gifts received, to hear him add, "And a stamp album from grandmother."

I had heard it several times, when I called him to me, and said, "But, Georgie, you did not get an album from your grandmother. Why do you say so?"

There was a wondering look on his face, as if he thought it strange that I should ask such a question, and he replied, "Well, mamma, grandma said, so it is the same as." I could not say a word to check his faith.

A month went by, and nothing was heard from the album. Finally, one day, I said, to test his faith, and really wondering in my heart why the album had not been sent,

"Well, Georgie, I think grandma has forgotten her promise."

"Oh, no, mamma," he quickly and firmly said, "she hasn't."

I watched the dear, trusting face, which, for a while, looked very sober, as if debating the possibilities I had suggested. Finally a bright light passed over it, and he said,

"Mamma, do you think it would do any good if I should write to her thanking her for the album?"

"I do not know," I said, "but you might try it."

A rich spiritual truth began to dawn upon me. In a few minutes a letter was prepared and committed to the mail, and he went off whistling his confidence in his grandma. In just a short time a letter came, saying:

"My dear Georgie: I have not forgotten my promise to you, of an album. I tried to get such a book as you desired, but could not get the sort you wanted; so I sent on to New York. It did not get here till after Christmas, and it was still not right, so I sent for another, and as it has not come as yet, I send you three dollars to get one in Chicago. Your loving grandma."

"As he read the letter, his face was the face of a victor. "Now, mamma, didn't I tell you?" came from the depths of a heart that never doubted, that, "against hope, believed in hope" that the stamp album would come. While he was trusting, grandma was working, and in due season faith became sight.

It is so human to want sight when we step out on the promises of God, but our Savior said to Thomas, and to the long roll of doubters who have ever since followed him: "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."—Mrs. Rounds.

---

## **BELIEVE AND RECEIVE - Vance Havner**

Yet believing, ye rejoice... Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:8, 9.

The formula for all the blessings of God is believe and receive. To all who believe, power is given to become sons of God—even to them that believe on His Name (John 1:12). When we pray, if we believe that we receive, we shall have what we ask (Mark 11:24). Our Lord spoke of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive (John 7:39). We believe God's Word, we receive His Son and with Him all things freely given in Him (Romans 8:32). We see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice. Believe, receive, believe you

have received... and rejoice!

---

## **BELIEVE AND RECEIVE** (Except - for full text click [Mark 11-24 Believe and receive](#))

Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.—11:24.

1. HERE we have a summary of the teaching of our Lord on prayer. Nothing will so much help to convince us of the sin of our remissness in prayer, to discover its causes, and to give us courage to expect entire deliverance, as the careful study and then the believing acceptance of that teaching. The more heartily we enter into the mind of our blessed Lord, and set ourselves to think about prayer as He thought, the more surely will His words be as living seeds. They will grow and produce in us their fruit—a life and practice exactly corresponding to the Divine truth they contain.

2. Yet the promises to prayer in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses of this eleventh chapter of St. Mark are so wonderful, that we are almost compelled to fall back before them, and ask ourselves whether we can have heard, or can have understood, aright. At the first sound, they surround our imaginations as with an air of fairyland; they seem to be something out of relation with the severities of the things that are: something out of relation with the necessary stringencies of a moral life. Then, if we feel that there is in our first sense something wrong, and begin to limit, to qualify, to explain, often it is not merely any childish misunderstanding of the promise, it is the promise itself that is slipping away from us; the solemn declaration of Christ begins to mean—nothing very definite or distinguishable: or, worse still, men find ground for pleasant mockery at the hollowness of a religious aspiration so transparently unreal. Do the words mean what they say, or do they not? or what do they mean?

---

### **Arthur Pink - Prayer**

“What things soever ye desire when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” (Mark 11:24)

BY THE words “believe that ye receive them:” we understand, expect God to give them to you. But it is at this point that so many of God’s people fail oftenest in their prayer lives. There are three chief things to be attended to in prayer.

**First**, make sure that you are asking for something that is in accordance with God’s Word: see 1 John 5:14. But right here, the devil will foil you unless you are upon your guard. He will come as an angel of light and preach a sermon to you on God’s holy will. O yes, the devil is quite capable even of that! It is our privilege and duty to know what God’s will is! “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). It is the revealed will of God which is in view in these passages, for with His “secret” will, we have nothing to do; that is none of our business. God’s revealed will is made known in His Word. Fix this in your mind; never allow Satan inject a thought (Eph. 4:27) to shake you thereon, that everything God has commanded you to do, every precept and exhortation addressed to you, is “God’s will” for you, and is to be turned into prayer for enabling grace. It is God’s will that you should be “sanctified” (1 Thess. 4:2), that you should “rejoice” (Phil. 4:4), that you should “make your calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10), that you should “grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord” (2 Pet. 3:18).

**Second**, having made sure that what you are praying for is according to God’s revealed will, then plead His promises, such as Matthew 7:7, Philippians 4:19, etc. Plead them in the name of Christ, asking God to give you the “desires of thine heart” (Ps. 37:4) for Christ’s sake, that He may be honored in and by a Godly walk from you, and that His people may be helped and encouraged by your example. Those are pleas which God cannot deny.

**Third**, and this is what we would earnestly and lovingly press upon the Christian reader: Expect God to do what you have asked. Unless there is an expectancy, faith is not fully in exercise. It is this expecting from Him which honours and pleases God, and which always draws down from Him answers of peace. There may be some difficulty, problem, trial, looming ahead of you, which assumes the proportions of a mountain. Never mind that: do not let it depress, discourage, or dismay you. Praise God it stands written in the eternal Word of Truth, “Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith and doubt not ... ye shall say unto this mountain be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done” (Matthew 21:21). Notice carefully, it is not “If thou doubt not and have faith,” but “if ye have faith” and then (while you are awaiting God’s answer) “doubt not,” but continue the fulfillment of His promise. When you first get down on your knees, beg God in the name of Christ and for His own glory’s sake, to work in you by His Spirit that expectancy of faith which will not take “NO” from Him; which reverently, but confidently says, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me” (Gen. 32:26). That is what honours God, that is what pleases Him, that is what obtains answers from Him.

“A friend at court!” No doubt that expression is more or less familiar to the older readers, but it has almost dropped out of use in this generation. It denoted that one had a friend possessing influence with another in authority, and using it on my behalf. How unspeakably blessed to know that the Christian has a friend at court, the Court of Heaven; “A friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” He has the ear of God, for on earth He declared “Thou hearest me always” (John 11:42). Then, make use of Him, and ask Him to present them to His Father and your Father, accompanied by His own all-prevailing merits; and, if they are for God’s glory

and thy (real) good, be fully assured that they shall be granted. Thus will Christ be honored and your faith strengthened.

---

**Mark 11:24** - R. A. Torrey was troubled about the grammar of that verse for a while (Mark 11:24) . . . "Believe you have it and you will have it," but he decided to quit worrying about the grammar and started trusting the Word! (Vance Havner)

---

### **Bite-Size Requests**

Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. — Mark 11:24

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:20-24

Lots of things are easier to do when they're bite-size. If you have a major task to get done, for example, it helps to divide it into smaller units and tackle them one at a time. This is true whether you are redecorating the house, packing for a vacation, or directing a church project.

Rosalind Rinker suggests that the same is true of prayer. She found that when she made very general, all-inclusive requests of God, it seemed that nothing happened. But when she began making specific, bite-size requests, she saw results.

She recommends that we make our requests very specific, and ask for what we really believe is according to God's will. Rinker adds that as we see God's answers to relatively small requests, we will find that we are asking for bigger needs with a greater degree of faith.

Have you been praying general, world-encompassing prayers without seeing results? It's wiser to ask for something smaller and more specific and really believe that it will be answered. For example, if you've been asking God to destroy all the pornography in the world, it would be better to pray that the convenience store on the corner would stop selling it. Then ask God what you can do to help bring that about.

Let's begin making bite-size requests! — David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

#### Prayer Suggestion

If you don't already have one, make a prayer list that includes several bite-size requests.

Keep the list, and then record how God answers.

Be specific in your prayers if you want specific answers.

---

**Mark 11:24 - "Believe that Ye Receive"** - "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24 - Here is one of our commonest failings. We confess our sins according to 1 John 1:9 but, instead of receiving his forgiveness and believing we have it, we commit another sin by worrying about it for weeks. We should thank him for forgiveness and, forgetting the things behind, press on. We overlook the tremendously important fact that failing to believe we have what God has promised and what faith has received is also a sin. Any disobedience of the command of our Lord is sin. He has commanded us to pray for things we need and then by faith receive them. Next he plainly commands us to "believe that ye have received them." Therefore, if we do not believe that we have received, we sin for all unbelief is sin. In the verse before our text our Lord said, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." Doubt is plain disobedience and disobedience is sin. So, beware of this snare of Satan; live believing and receiving and believing that you are receiving! (Vance Havner)

---

**Mark 11:24 - Believe Your Beliefs** - What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11:24. Believe that you have and you shall have—that is the grammar of faith! We are to ask for wisdom but we must ask in faith, nothing wavering (James 1:6). The believer already has all things in Christ, and by faith he lays hold of what is already his. We must not only believe that we receive, we must believe that we believe. We must believe our beliefs and doubt our doubts. Alas, we doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts! To be always examining our faith is to destroy it. There is a strange twist of mind that afflicts some harassed souls who can never be sure of anything. These are ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. We must give ourselves credit for such faith as we can muster. The father of the demonized boy said to our Lord, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." His faith was weak and mixed with unbelief and he knew it, but he knew that he had at least a little faith and that faith he asserted. Of course, our faith, like every other good and perfect gift, is of God, but God expects us to use it, affirm it, not doubt it. "If thou canst believe" implies that we can if we will. God would not ask us to believe if we could



not. (Vance Havner)

---

**Mark 11:24 - Shouting at Jericho** - Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city. Joshua 6:16.

The people shouted before the walls fell. Anybody can shout after they fall. Faith anticipates victory and celebrates in advance.

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk. 11:24). "Believe that ye receive them"—the walls are as good as down already when God says so. Faith takes His word for the deed and shouts now.

"The Lord hath given you the city." He has given us all things freely with the gift of His Son. We already have it in Christ, though we may not actually have possessed our possessions. Faith is the land deed for our inheritance with God's signature.

Jericho may loom big and ominous, but if, like Joshua, you have had a meeting with the Captain of the Lord's host, fear not. "Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." Anticipate victory and shout in advance!

**Mark 11:25** "Whenever you stand praying, **forgive**, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

- stand: Zec 3:1 Lu 18:11 Rev 11:4
- forgive: Mt 6:12,14,15 18:23-35 Lu 6:37 Eph 4:32 Col 3:13 Jas 2:13
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 6:12; 14; 15+ 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors....14+ "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

**Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone** - **Forgive** is the same verb [aphiemi](#) used for "releasing a wife" (divorcing) and in secular Greek is found in a writing that says in effect "let the pot drop!" That's a great word picture of forgiveness. Let the pot drop or perhaps in modern colloquial speech "Bury the hatchet." (Just don't let the handle stick up to you can grab it again!) And here is the really difficult part - **forgive** is in the [present imperative](#) meaning do it and keep on doing it as your habitual practice! Now just try to do that with someone who has offended you or hurt your feelings unfairly! You cannot do it! It is IM-possible in our innate power. But it is HIM-possible in the Spirit's incomparable power. See discussion of [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) commands such as **forgive**.

Wuest - The standing posture when praying is not commanded here, nor is it the only posture allowed. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Parunak:** In prayer we are not demanding what we are owed, but are asking God for a favor; it is inconsistent to do this while we are embroiled in bitterness with our fellow creatures.

**Brian Bell** - An unforgiving spirit will form a fatal roadblock in our prayer life. Ps.66:18+ "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear."

**J C Ryle:** We have no right to look for mercy, if we are not ready to extend mercy to our brethren. We cannot really feel the sinfulness of the sins we ask to have pardoned if we cherish malice towards our fellow men. We must have the heart of a brother toward our neighbor on earth, if we wish God to be our Father in heaven. We must not flatter ourselves that we have the Spirit of adoption if we cannot bear and forbear.

**so that** - Term of purpose. The purpose of personally forgiving others before going to the Father.

**your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions** - If we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us. This is speaking not of our daily communion which is disrupted by holding on to unforgiveness. This does not speak of the full forgiveness the believer receives in redemption by the blood of Christ.

**Trespases** (3900) ([paraptoma](#) from **para** = aside + **pipto** = fall) is literally a falling aside or beside to stumble on something (so as to loose footing) and in its figurative ethical usage (all uses in the NT) it describes a "false step", a violation of moral standards or a deviation from living according to what has been revealed as the right way to live. **Paraptoma** is a false step out of the appointed way, a trespass on forbidden ground, a stepping

out of line of true conduct, a deviation from truth and uprightness. **Paraptoma** describes what a person has done in transgressing the will and law of God by some false step or failure. **Paraptoma** is akin to parapipto, to fall beside a person or thing, to fall away, to deviate from the right path, or to turn aside (see note [Hebrews 6:6](#)). The basic idea of **paraptoma** is that of stumbling or falling so as to lose one's footing

I found a little remedy  
To ease the life we live  
And make each day a happier one:  
It is the word "forgive."  
—Anonymous

**One illustration** - **WHEN FORGIVENESS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE** - **Corrie ten Boom**, author of **The Hiding Place**, was taken captive and spent time in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. While in prison, Corrie saw incredible abuse, so inhumane that it drove the prisoners to incredible depths, including intentionally allowing lice to breed on their bodies because the more lice they had, the less likely it would be that the guards would molest them! And Corrie even witnessed the death of her own dear sister.

After the war, God sent Corrie ten Boom on a mission of mercy through the war-torn cities to encourage residents to choose **forgiveness** over **bitterness**. She would motivate her audiences by sharing some of the atrocities she had experienced, implying that if she could forgive such horrors, so could her listeners. One night speaking, she immediately recognized the man who came walking down the aisle as a particularly cruel guard in one of the concentration camps. The man did not recognize her however. As he approached Corrie he said...

Fraulein, you don't know me, but I was a guard in one of those camps. After the war, God saved me. I wish I could go back and undo those years. I can't, but I've just been prompted by God to come tonight and ask you, **would you please forgive me?**

Then he extended his hand to her. Can you imagine the horrible thoughts and memories that raced through Corrie's mind as she recognized his face and then even worse, heard his incredible plea for forgiveness? How could she? Corrie said her arms froze at her side and she was literally unable to move. The flashbacks in her mind replaying the atrocities, the death of her sister, the abuse. And then God's Spirit said to her,

Corrie, what have you been telling everyone else to do? As an act of your will, will you choose to forgive?

Corrie went on to explain what happened next...

I reached out my hand, and I put it in his, and I said, 'You're forgiven.'

She later reported that at that moment...

It was like a dam broke loose—all the bitterness and resentment—and God set me free.

---

## The Spirit of Forgiveness

"Forgive, if ye have ought against any" Mark 11:25

Note the language. If there labours in our heart the refusal to forgive then we are out of tune with an infinite God and out of harmony with the forgiving Jesus. The spirit of forgiveness should flood and fill our souls.

Of course the divine principle of forgiveness must be observed. While the spirit of forgiveness should pervade our beings, forgiveness cannot be imparted until repentance is manifested. Immediately the offender begs forgiveness it should be instantly forthcoming. We are not to question the motives, we are to grant the request until seventy times seven.

No forgiveness, however, can be imparted if repentance is not manifested, that is the divine order which cannot be breached. Parting thought: "If the offender say I repent, the offended must say, I remit"—Geo. Swinnock.

---

**Garth Brooks** has a song which speaks of the unforgiving heart...

**We bury the hatchet**  
**But leave the handle stickin' out**  
We're always diggin' up things  
We should forget about  
When it comes to forgettin'

Baby, there ain't no doubt  
We bury the hatchet  
But leave the handle sticking out

-Garth Brooks, "[We Bury The Hatchet](#)"  
on the Album: Ropin The Wind

---

#### **Related Resources:** Forgive/Forgiveness

- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Ephesians 4:32
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Colossians 3:13
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Matthew 6:12 and Matthew 6:14-15.
- Illustrations and quotes on forgiveness

#### **NT words for forgive/forgiveness:**

- Forgiveness ([859](#)) aphesis
- Forgive (send away from, cancel the debt, release, let go) ([863](#)) aphiami
- Forgive (grant, freely give, bestow) ([5483](#)) charizomai

**Excellent 5 Part Sermon Series on Forgiveness by Dr Ray Pritchard:** following messages are also in his book -**The Healing Power of Forgiveness** ([see reviews by readers](#))

- [1\) Forgiveness Healing the Hurt We Never Deserved](#)
- [2\) Forgiveness and the Lord's Prayer](#)
- [3\) Judge Not!](#)
- [4\) Is Total Forgiveness Realistic](#)
- [5\) The Final Step-Blessing Your Enemies](#)

#### **Other Resources on Forgiveness**

- [Father, Forgive Them by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
  - [Forgiving the Unforgivable by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
  - [How Can I Learn to Forgive? by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
  - [Unless You Forgive by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
  - [Forgiving the Unforgivable article by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
  - [Forgiveness of Injuries \(Mt 18:21-22\) by John Angell James](#)
  - [Forgiveness of Sins by Henry Law - 17 Chapter Treatise!](#)
- 

#### **G Campbell Morgan - Whosoever ye stand praying, forgive.—Mark 11.25.**

That is a law of prayer. May it not be that much unanswered prayer is the result of forgetting this? Forgetting is the right word. If we remember it, we either cease to pray, or we forgive. It is impossible to pray easily when the heart is hot and angry with someone who has done us wrong. But in the underlying depths of our consciousness there are often feelings toward others which are those of resentment, even though at the moment we are not occupied with them. If it be so, then, according to this word of Jesus we have no right to expect that our Father will forgive us our trespasses. Let us think what it would mean if we always remembered this word. If we did so, our first inquiry whenever we desired to pray would be: Is there any person whom we have not yet forgiven? Of course, the presupposition is that the person has really wronged us in some way. Apart from that there would be nothing to forgive. Is there such a person? Then, before we can pray, we must forgive that person. Then, after we have 'prayed, we shall have to carry out our act of forgiveness by seeking the forgiven person, and establishing the relationship that results from forgiveness. What gracious results would follow in the communion of the saints if this word of Jesus were remembered and obeyed? Love would win wonderful triumphs, and prayer would become powerful and prevailing. (Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

---

#### **Forgiveness First**

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."—Mark 11:25

John Wesley, the English evangelist and founder of the Methodist Church, met an acquaintance on the street one day. "I heard that you and Mr. So-and-so have become enemies," said Wesley. "Have you come to terms with him?"

"No, I haven't," the friend replied. "Why should I? He's the one who should be blamed. I'll never forgive him for I am the one who was hurt."

Looking directly into the man's eyes, Wesley said, "Then you should never again commit sin. I don't think you can say you have never committed a sin. You have so far because somebody has forgiven your faults. But if you say that you don't want to forgive someone who has wronged you, from now on don't expect to be forgiven by anyone else either." At this, the man lowered his head and repented bitterly of his faults.

Christ was so broken by our sin that He left His heavenly home to come to us and offer forgiveness. If someone has hurt you and there is a broken relationship, in prayer ask Christ to give you the strength to forgive. Then contact that person and let them know you miss them and want to restore the friendship.

"He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself."—George Herbert (Peter Kennedy - From Generation to Generation)

**Mark 11:26 "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions."**

**NET NOTE:** A number of significant MSS of various texttypes (a B L W D Y 565 700 892 pc sa) do not include 11:26 "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your sins." The verse is included in most later MSS (A [C D] Q [(1, 13)33] Ū lat) and is not likely to be original. It is probably an assimilation to Matt 6:15. The present translation follows NA(27) in omitting the verse number, a procedure also followed by a number of other modern translations.

**Utley** writes that "This verse is absent in the Greek uncial manuscripts α, B, L, and W. It is included with several variations in MSS A, D, K, X, and the Peshitta translation and the Diatessaron (i.e. the four Gospels merged into one). It seems that an ancient scribe added this phrase from Matt. 6:15."

**Mark 11:27 They came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him,**

Wuest - And they come again into Jerusalem. And when He was walking about in the Temple, there come the chief priests and the scribes and the elders, (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

- **as he:** Mal 3:1 Mt 21:23-27 Lu 20:1-8 Joh 10:23 18:20
- **the chief:** Mk 14:1 Ps 2:1-5 Ac 4:5-8,27,28
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:23 When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"

Luke 20:1+ On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him,

## CONFRONTATION IN THE TEMPLE

**Mark Akin** - Mark 11:27-12:44 records 5 temple controversies in Jerusalem that parallel 5 earlier controversies in Galilee (2:1-3:6). In both cases his opponents are the religious leaders. Now that He is in Jerusalem the stakes are much higher and the intensity of the conflict much stronger. Things are moving to an inevitable climax. Things are moving to the cross and His bloody death. In this first of 5 temple controversies we will see some common reasons people are not willing to come and follow Jesus as one of His disciples. We will quickly discover that not much has changed in 2000 years. What kept people from putting their faith and trust in Him then are the same kinds of reasons that cause them to refuse Him today.

**They came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him** - Note the phrase **came again** signifying it was Tuesday, His third day in Jerusalem. Mark said He was **He was walking in the temple** and Luke 20:1+ says "He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel ([euaggelizo/euangelizo](#))" Clearly He could easily be doing both, teaching and preaching as He walked along. Jesus was not going to let one second of His dwindling hours be wasted for He had come to seek and to save the lost (Lk 19:10+)! That is a approach every should disciple should seek to emulate, redeeming the time for the days are evil (Eph 5:16+, [my youtube video](#))

Luke 20:1+ **On one of the days** - When is one of the days? Most say this is probably Tuesday morning, but MacArthur thinks it is Wednesday (because he feels that "Palm Sunday" really occurred on Monday! [See his logic here](#) or [here](#)) Where in the Temple? We don't know for certain, but the biggest space would have been the **Court of the Gentiles** (about 10 football fields in size - see diagram above) which had just been purged of the perversion being practiced.

See also - [What was the meaning and importance of the baptism of John the Baptist? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Mark's version gives more background of what Jesus did each day (Note [MacArthur's scene](#) would advance each day, so Sunday is really Monday, etc) -

- Sunday PM - Mk 11:11;
- Monday AM - Mk 11:12-18 (Fig tree cursing not in Luke),
- Monday PM - Mk 11:19
- Tuesday AM - Mk 11:20-26 (Not found in Luke)

It is notable that in Jesus' final days of life He made **teaching and preaching** in the Temple the focal point of His last days ministry. It is not surprising that these same two verbs (**teaching and preaching**) were used to describe His followers who walked in His steps (Acts 5:42; 15:35, cf 1 Pe 2:21+). We do well to follow their example!

[Brian Bell](#) - This was the Sanhedrin's right & responsibility to investigate anyone who claimed to be sent by God. - Except...they didn't have open minds or sincere motives.

**The chief priests and the scribes and the elders** - These are the "big boys!" This is the full designation for the [Sanhedrin](#), the official ruling body of seventy members developed out of the Great Synagogue of Ezra's day and composed of the High Priest and his family, local scribes, and wealthy, influential elders.

**Akin** writes "This is the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court, who exercised both political and religious authority in Israel. It consisted of 71 men lead by the acting high priest. Their power was enormous and they functioned as a —go-between|| with the Romans and the people of Israel. They were super sensitive to anything that could threaten their authority and Jesus was clearly a threat.

**Wuest** - This is the third day in which our Lord visits the Temple. He was walking about probably in the colonnades of the Temple. As He walked along He was teaching the people (Matthew). Then, representatives of three orders approach Him, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. The definite article is used in each case, which fact indicates that those who came, represented their own group. This united action was probably agreed upon during the night. Their questions were in themselves reasonable ones from their point of view. They were the custodians of the Temple. Our Lord, by forcibly ejecting those who were engaged in business in the Temple, was claiming a superior jurisdiction. They ask Him in public now to produce His credentials, first, to state the nature of His authority, and second, to name the person from whom He had received it. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Chief Priests** (749) ([archiereus](#) from **arche** = leader idea of rank + **hierous** = priest) refers to the priests that were chief over other priests. In the plural as in this verse [archiereus](#) refers to all the ruling priests, the members of the high-priestly families as a group, the upper echelons of the priestly class, especially those who served on the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court (Lk 9:22, Mk 8:31) There were 24 courses of priests who took turns serving in the Temple. At Passover, ALL of the priests were in attendance, and without doubt the upper echelon from among the priests would be in this delegation.

**Scribes** (1122) ([grammateus](#) from **grapho** = to write) were recognized experts in the law of Moses and in traditional laws and regulations. (Mt 2.4). Most sources consider the **lawyers** (nomikos - meaning one skilled in the Mosaic law) to be scribes specialized in the jurisprudence of the Law of Moses. The traditional rendering as "**scribes**" does not communicate much to the modern English reader, for whom the term might mean professional copyist, if it means anything at all so a rendering such as "experts in the law" comes closer to the actual meaning.

**Elders** (4245)(**presbuteros** the comparative form of **présbus** = an old man or an ambassador) referred to men who were older or more senior and deserving of a sense of venerability. **Presbuteros** is transliterated into English as "presbyter" (a leader in one of the Jewish communities--especially a member of the **Sanhedrin**-or of the early Christian churches) and from which the word "priest" (from Late Latin presbyter) was derived.

**Mark 11:28 and [began] saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"**

Wuest - and they kept on saying to Him, By what sort of delegated authority are you doing these things, or, who gave you this delegated authority to do these things? (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

- Ex 2:14 Nu 16:3,13 Ac 7:27,28,38,39,51
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:23 When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"

Luke 20:2+ and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?" 3 Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me: 4"Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?"



James Tissot: Jesus' Authority Questioned

### RELIGIOUS LEADERS' QUESTION JESUS' AUTHORITY

**and began saying** (imperfect tense - over and over) **to Him, "By what authority (exousia) are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority (exousia) to do these things?"** - **These things** refers to His cleansing of the Temple. **Authority** in simple terms is the right and the might to do a certain thing (in this case including cleansing the Temple). And it would take both "right" (He was God and the Temple was God's) and the might (the Court of the Gentiles was about 10 football fields in size and filled with money changers, lambs, pigeons, etc - it would have taken "might" to cleanse such a large area).

**Utley** - This has been and is the crucial question about Jesus. Where did He get His power and authority to speak and act? Jesus did not fit their expected mold of what YHWH's Messiah would do and say!

**Authority** (1849)(**exousia** from **éxesti** = it is permitted, it is lawful) means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right. "**Authority** or right is the dominant meaning (of exousia) in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousia** refers to delegated **authority** and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone. **Exousia** means "delegated authority." The word means also "the power of authority and of right." It was used in legal practice of delegated authority. Here it is used of our Lord as having that authority in Himself, not derived from others. **Exousia** is an important term in the Gospels. Many conflicts in Jesus' life and ministry turn on debates about authority or the idea that Jesus taught with an unparalleled authority (Mt 7:29; 8:9; 9:6, 8; 21:23-27; 28:18; Mk 1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 11:28-33; Lk 4:32, 36; 5:24; 7:8; 20:2-8).

Some Uses of **authority** in Mark:



- Mark 1:22+ They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having **authority**, and not as the scribes.
- Mark 1:27+ They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with **authority!** He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."
- Mark 2:10+ "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has **authority** on earth to forgive sins"—He \*said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home."

As [Akin](#) says (from the verses above) "This man teaches with authority, cast out demons with authority and heals with authority. He does only what God can do! But they are not satisfied. They request his ordination papers. Show us your credentials! These are not honest questions. They want to destroy Him. They are not motivated by a willingness to know who He is and they have no interest in bringing their lives under His authority. Their goal is to ensnare Him, embarrass Him, and discredit Him. And they think they have found a way. If He admits He has no religious credentials, that He did not go to seminary or even Bible College, and that He is acting on His own authority, He will probably lose the respect and following of the people. His popularity ratings will tank and they can be finished with this troublemaker. On the other hand if He makes a claim to divine authority then they could charge Him with blasphemy, arrest Him and start the process for His destruction. Either way this country —hick from the sticks|| would be finished.

**Paul Apple** on **authority** - People today don't respond well to the authority of Jesus; to the authority of the Word of God; nobody is going to tell me what to do; I will read the bible to have it say what I want it to say; I will live my life the way I think best You can't have the salvation that Jesus offers without the authority that Jesus commands

**J C Ryle** - The spirit which prompted this demand is too evident to be mistaken. These men hated and envied Christ. They saw His influence increasing. They saw their own power waning. They resolved, if possible, to stop the progress of this new teacher; and the point on which they made their assault was His authority. His mighty works they ought to have examined. His teaching they ought, in all fairness, to have compared with their own Scriptures. But they refused to take either one course or the other. They preferred to call in question His commission.

Every true-hearted Christian who tries to do good in the world, must make up his mind to be treated like his Master. He must never be surprised to find, that the self-righteous and the worldly-minded dislike His ways. The lawfulness of his proceedings will be constantly called in question. He will be regarded as meddlesome, disorderly, and self-conceited, a pestilent fellow, and a troubler of Israel. (Acts 24:5; 1 Kings 18:17.) Scripture-readers, district-visitors, lay-agents, and un-ordained missionaries, are specially liable to meet with such treatment. And worst of all they will often meet with enemies, where they ought to find friends.

Let all who are attacked by the world for trying to do good, take comfort in the thought that they are only drinking of the cup which Christ drank. Their Master in heaven sympathizes with them. Let them work on patiently, and believe that, if they are faithful, their work will speak for itself. The world's opposition is sure to attend every really good work. If the servants of Christ are to cease from every movement which the world calls in question, they will soon come to an entire standstill. If we are to wait till the world approves our plans, and is satisfied with the propriety of our efforts, we shall never do anything on earth. ([Mark 11:27–33. Spiritual blindness of the chief priests and scribes,—mental dishonesty of prejudiced unbelievers](#))

**Mark 11:29** And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you **answer** Me, and then I will tell you by what **authority** I do these things.

- **I will:** Isa 52:13 Mt 21:24 Lu 20:3-8
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:24 Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.

Luke 20:3+ Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me:

## JESUS' QUESTIONS RELIGIOUS LEADERS' AUTHORITY!

**And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question** (literally "a word"), **and you answer** (command) **Me, and then I will tell you by what authority** ([exousia](#)) **I do these things** - Jesus in typical rabbinical fashion responds to their question with a question.

Notice the time phrase "**then**." Only after they answer Him, will He **then** tell them from whence His authority comes. What are **these things**? In context this would especially refer to His cleansing the Temple, which resulted in a significant financial loss to the religious leaders. (Mk 11:15-17)

**Utley** - Jesus often used this second-question technique when dealing with those who tried to trick or trap Him (cf. Mk 2:6–9, 19, 25–26; 3:23–24; 10:3, 37–39; 12:14–16). He would be open with them if they would be open to Him (cf. v. 33).")

**Akin** - Jesus would have been a masterful chess player without a doubt. He brilliantly makes a counter move in verses 29-30 by asking the representative delegation from the Sanhedrin a question, —Jesus said to them, —I will ask you one question [lit. —one word]; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.|| Jesus' counter-question was a common debating technique among rabbis in that day. And, it exposed their heart and motives. Jesus says let's look at the evidence of the one who paved the way for my coming and with whom I closely aligned myself: the ministry of John the Baptist. Interestingly, those who come to Jesus with hostile intentions never receive a direct or straight answer. Oh, they get a response, but it is one that forces them to think and reason. This is reinforced in our text as Jesus twice commands them, —answer me|| (v. 29, 30). This —sharp demand|| for an answer is found only in Mark. The implication is they lack the courage to give an honest answer.

**Wuest** - Our Lord meets their questions with another question. He says that He has one question to ask them. The one question is not contrasted to the two questions asked Him, but points to the simplicity of the issue. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - The late Bill Klem was one of major league baseball's best-known and powerful umpires. When he was behind the plate, he made it clear that he was completely in charge of everything that mattered. In one important game, it was the ninth inning. The batter hit the ball to left field. The runner on third ran for home with the potential winning run. The catcher crouched to make the tag. The runner, the catcher, and the umpire all collided and were laid out in the dirt. From one dugout, the players were screaming, "He's safe! He's safe!" In the other dugout, they were shouting, "He's out! He's out!" The fans in the stands were going wild. In the midst of all the confusion and noise, Bill Klem stood up, looked directly into the stands, raised his fist and exclaimed, "He ain't nothin' till I've called it!" Bill Klem made it clear that everyone had to submit to his authority.

---

**John Stevenson** gives an interesting **illustration** introducing his message on Luke 20 - His name was Irwin Rommel. He was to be known as the Desert Fox. But before leading the Axis army in North Africa, Rommel was a commander in the German army as they invaded France in 1940. It was during that invasion that Rommel tells of having taken a ride in his command car to reconnoiter the front. He was driving through the Belgium hills when he rounded a turn and came face to face with a truck filled with enemy soldiers. Without missing a beat, Rommel was out of his command car and calling loudly to the soldiers, "You are all now prisoners of the German army. Just drive your truck in that direction and you will be processed accordingly." The soldiers in the truck nodded their agreement and moved to comply. The truck behind them followed suit. As did the truck behind that one. In amazement, Rommel watched while 20 truckloads of soldiers meekly surrendered, all because one man had spoken with authority.

One of the distinctive things about Jesus was that He spoke with a calm but unshakable authority. This set him apart from the rabbinical teachers of that day who were always having to quote the opinion of some earlier rabbi or expert. Jesus spoke from God. He was able to say, "Thus saith the Lord." And He even went further to say, "Thus saith ME."

He did not only speak with authority; He also ACTED with authority. He acted with authority when He commanded demons to leave those whom they had possessed. He acted with authority when He told a storm to be silent. He acted with authority when He told a lame man to walk, when He rebuked disease and it departed, and when He commanded a dead girl to get up. And He acted with authority when He came in and cleansed the Temple, driving out those who had come to make a profit instead of to listen to the Prophet.

Imagine what would be the reaction if an out-of-town carpenter showed up this Sunday in your church and began overturning pews and tossing around the offering plates. What would be your reaction? It would probably be the same as was seen by the Temple leaders: "What gives you the right to do these things? Just who do you think you are?" ([The Authority of the King - Luke 20:1-47](#))

---

**Mark 11:30 "Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me."**

- Mk 1:1-11 9:13 Mt 3:1-17 Lu 3:1-20 Joh 1:6-8,15-36 3:25-36
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

Matthew 21:25 "The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?" And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?'"

Luke 20:4+ "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?"



THE AUTHORITY FOR THE BAPTISMS PERFORMED BY JOHN

## JESUS PRESENTS THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA

What is "horns of a dilemma"? If you are on the horns of a dilemma, you have to choose between two things, both of which are unpleasant or difficult. ([Collins English Dictionary](#)) One "horn" was "from heaven" and the other was "from men." The "horns" are further explained in Mark 11:31, 32. As Paul said "the foolishness of God is wiser than men," (1Cor 1:25+) and Jesus' answer shows His divine wisdom.

**James Edwards:** John's significance for Jesus – and in this instance for the Sanhedrin – is as a herald of Jesus' divine Sonship, with which Mark begins (Mk 1,1, 11) and ends (Mk 15:39) his Gospel. The "these things" of which the Sanhedrin inquires can be understood only if they are seen as consequences of the authority (exousia) of Jesus as the Son of God, which John's baptism inaugurated. What Jesus does as God's servant has meaning only because of who he is as God's Son. The exousia of Jesus is in fact the exousia of God. (See [The Gospel According to Mark](#))

**NOTE:** To understand what Jesus was doing, one needs to know that the **baptism of John** was a type of baptism that had never been practiced in Israel prior to John's ministry. See the commentary on Luke 20:4 for more discussion of the baptism of John.

**Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer (aorist imperative) Me."** - Jesus answered their question with a question that dealt with their rejection of John the Baptist who had called them (Pharisees and Sadducees) a "brood of vipers" when they approached him for baptism (Mt 3:7+). John knew their hearts and knew that were not really seeking truth (cf. Mk 11:31–33). They were more concerned with maintaining religious control over the nation.

**Brian Bell** - Jesus was basically asking, are you prepared to recognize God-given authority when you see it? (clearly they were not!)

**Paul Apple** - Remember the mission of John the Baptist laid out in John chapter 1 Here was one recognized as a prophet by the people Not an intellectual problem as if they did not know the answer to their question; it was a moral problem; did not want to submit to the authority of Jesus in their hearts

**Wuest** - The answer to our Lord's one question should clear the air. He refers to John the Baptist. The latter had testified to the divine source of His mission. The question of the Sanhedrin resolved itself into a question as to the source of the Baptist's teaching. In demanding an answer from them, our Lord was claiming an answer as from authorized teachers who were acquainted with the facts. In twentieth century language, He put them on the spot. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Akin** - Like Jesus, **John** came preaching a message of repentance. And, like Jesus, he bypassed the temple and the official religious authorities. If Jesus was a country hick from the sticks I don't know how to describe John. A —wilderness wacko|| might have been the popular opinion within the temple mafia. Not so, however, among the people and hence the dilemma of the religious leaders.

**Mark 11:31** They [began] reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you

- Why: Mt 11:7-14 21:25-27,31,32 Joh 1:15,29,34,36 3:29-36
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:25 "The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?" And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?'

Luke 20:5+ They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'

### "HORN" NUMBER 1... WAS JOHN'S BAPTISM FROM HEAVEN

**They began reasoning** ([dialogizomai](#) in imperfect tense - over and over) **among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe (pisteuo) him?'** - The serpentine men were acting on the basis of expediency rather than conviction. Their fear was how is it going to turn out for us (answering either way)? The religious leaders are at least smart enough to know they are ["in a pickle."](#)(in a quandary or some other difficult position.) ([see interesting origin of phrase](#)).

**Wuest on reasoning among themselves** - Conference in groups was scarcely possibly at this time. The same thought flashed through their minds. If they would accept the divine mission of the Baptist, they would charge themselves as a class with having rejected his baptism. This would give our Lord an advantage which He would not be slow to use. If they said that John's baptism was of purely human origin, they would place themselves in a dangerous position with regard to the crowds, even to the place of being stoned. The people might look upon their attribution to man's words, that which they held to be of God. Furthermore, John's martyrdom had deepened the regard with which he was held by the people. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**MacArthur** - John had clearly testified that Jesus was the Messiah. If John was a prophet whose words were true, they ought to believe his testimony about Christ. (Borrow [The MacArthur study Bible](#))

**What the Bible teaches** - If they admitted, as the people believed, that John was a prophet from God, then their rejection of him was rank unbelief against the messenger of God. ([What the Bible Teaches – Luke](#))

**MacArthur:** Strong challenge. Our Lord is stunningly brilliant. They're really on the hot seat. If they said the ministry of John is from God, then they have to admit that Jesus is the Messiah because that's what John said. If they say the ministry of God is not from God, it's from men, then they've got a problem because all the people knew that John was a real prophet. You see, it's a package deal. You can't take John without Jesus. And you can't throw away Jesus without throwing away John. ([The Confrontation Over Authority](#) )

**Akin** - Verses 31-32 explain clearly their problem, —And they discussed it with one another, saying, —If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, Why then did you not believe him?' But shall we say, From man'? —they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. I think it is crucial that they do not deny the evidence as they huddle up to draft their responses. They struggle with how to explain it away and set it aside. John was popular with the people and his ministry universally believed to have been given to him by God. So what if he had no human credentials, he had God's! And yet in spite of the evidence, the religious leaders rejected him and did not lift a finger or say a word when he was brutally and unjustly murdered by Herod (Mk 6:14-29). Jesus' question is pure genius. He is not being evasive in any way. His argument is basically this: my claim to authority is based on the possibility of a divine authoritative ministry without human authorization given directly by God. You want proof? See John the Baptist! Here is a perfect example universally affirmed by the people. If you have any doubts, then let's ask them. Now, if you are unwilling to grant my premise and accept the evidence I have put before you, then we are at an impasse and I can't help you any further. If you are so determined not to admit what is plain for all to see, then we have nothing further to talk about. If you cannot judge the ministry of John based upon the evidence, then you are not qualified to judge me either! Your willful blindness condemns you. When Mark began his gospel he cited Mal. 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 linking the ministries of John and Jesus to prophetic promise as well as to one another. The evidence is there, but the hearts of these men will not embrace it. They may attempt to put forth a rational argument against Jesus, but in the end it is an emotional reaction rooted in a fear of losing control, losing their position, losing their friends, losing their way of life. Ultimately, for so many, the real problem is not the evidence. The problem is them, it is us and our sin. The idols of the heart lurking beneath the surface is the real issue. If I accept that Jesus is the Son of God who died for

my sins and was raised from the dead then my life will never be the same. But I like my life, my set up. With eyes shut and ears plugged, I do not want to talk about this anymore. As Abraham says to the rich man in hell in Luke 16:31, — ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’

**Believe** (4100)(**pisteuo**) means to consider something to be true and thus worthy of one's trust. Friberg - (1) as primarily an intellectual evaluation believe; (a) with what one is convinced of added as an object believe (in), be convinced of (Jn 11.26b); (b) as an evaluative orienter, using hoti or the accusative and an infinitive believe that (Acts 9.26; 15.11); (c) as having confidence in what is spoken or written, using the dative believe, give credence to, think to be true ( Jn 2.22); (d) as having confidence in a person, using the dative believe, give credence to someone (Mk 16.14); (2) as primarily a religious commitment, especially with God or Christ as the object of faith believe (in), trust; (a) with the object in the dative have faith in, believe (Acts 16.34); (b) especially denoting the exercise of saving faith, with the object expressed by using eivj or evpi, and the accusative, believe in or on ( Jn 3.16; Acts 9.42); (c) as denoting relying on God for help have confidence, believe (Mt 21.22); (3) as committing something to someone entrust, trust (Lk 16.11); passive, as having something committed to someone be entrusted with ( Ro 3.2) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) )

Pisteuo in Mark - Mk. 1:15; Mk. 5:36; Mk. 9:23; Mk. 9:24; Mk. 9:42; Mk. 11:23; Mk. 11:24; Mk. 11:31; Mk. 13:21; Mk. 15:32; Mk. 16:13; Mk. 16:14; Mk. 16:16; Mk. 16:17;

**Mark 11:32 "But shall we say, 'From men?'--they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet.**

- they: Mk 6:20 12:12 Mt 14:5 21:46 Lu 20:19 22:2 Ac 5:26
- for: Mt 3:5,6 21:31,32 Lu 7:26-29 20:6-8 Joh 10:41
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:26 “But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet.”

Luke 20:6+ “But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.”

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.

## HORN # 2 FEAR OF MEN NOT OF GOD

**But shall we say, 'From men?'--they were afraid (**phobeo**) of the people, for everyone considered (held) John to have been a real prophet (**prophetes**)** - These hypocrites are exposed and in danger of death for Luke 20:6+ says "if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death." (See [Stoning in Judaism](#).) It is worth noting that something is stated twice in this section of Mark 11:32 and then Mark 12:12 -- **They were afraid of the people.**

**Akin** adds that "The fear of man hindered their movement toward Jesus. Their fear of what others would think paralyzed them. Their fear of what others might do. Their fear of losing face. Their fear of losing power and position and prestige. Be honest with yourself today. How much of your hesitation and alleged doubts and unanswered questions is really a mask to hide your fear of what faith in Christ might cost you socially, culturally, relationally, financially?"

**Wuest** - Conference in groups was scarcely possibly at this time. The same thought flashed through their minds. If they would accept the divine mission of the Baptist, they would charge themselves as a class with having rejected his baptism. This would give our Lord an advantage which He would not be slow to use. If they said that John's baptism was of purely human origin, they would place themselves in a dangerous position with regard to the crowds, even to the place of being stoned. The people might look upon their attribution to man's words, that which they held to be of God. Furthermore, John's martyrdom had deepened the regard with which he was held by the people. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**Mark 11:33 Answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."**

- We: Isa 1:3 6:9,10 29:9-14 42:19,20 56:10 Jer 8:7-9 Ho 4:6 Mal 2:7,8 Mt 15:14 23:16-26 Joh 3:10 Ro 1:18-22,28 2Co 3:15 2Co 4:3,4 2Th 2:10-12
- Neither: Job 5:13 Pr 26:4,5 Mt 16:4 21:27 Lu 10:21,22 20:7,8 22:66-69 Joh 9:27
- **Mark 11 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Matthew 21:27 And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Luke 20:8+ So they answered that they did not know where it came from. 8 And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

## WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS... PUNT!

**Answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know."** - They are lying through their teeth. The idiomatic phrase that is apropos regarding the response of the religious leaders is that they were "[on the horns of a dilemma](#)" which is defined as having to choose between two things, both of which are unpleasant or difficult. In short they were between "[a between a rock and a hard place](#)" if they said ANYTHING and they knew it, so they said NOTHING! They see clearly the two horns of their dilemma and choose to "punt!" As **Akin** says their answer "We do not know" was a lie motivated by fear. They would rather keep their position and live a lie than submit to Christ and walk in the truth. Their problem was not dullness of mind but stubbornness of will. They had neither sincere motives or an open mind. Cowardice instead of courage had become their barometer."

**And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority (exousia) I do (present tense) these things** - That is true here, but then in Mark 12:1-12 He gives them the parable of the wicked tenant farmers. Mk 12:12 says "And they were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for **they understood that He spoke the parable against them.** And so they left Him and went away."

**Utley** - Jesus answers them by the parable in Mark 12:1-12, which is one of the most severe condemnations of Israel and her leaders in the entire NT.

**Stevenson** writes "I enjoy playing chess. There sometimes comes a point in a chess game where, no matter what you do, you are going to lose a piece. That is what happened here. They pondered their possible range of answers and came to the conclusion that, no matter what they said, it would be wrong. Notice that they are more interested in fighting Jesus and in holding onto their popularity than they are in learning the truth. The one thing that they do not do is to ask, "I wonder if John and Jesus are right in what they are saying?" Why? Why don't they see their need for the truth? It is because they have a vested interest in continuing in their unbelief. And so, they refuse to answer the question." ([A Question of Authority](#))

**R C Foster** summarizes this section - "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" Two questions are matched against the two which they have asked. Baptism was such a concrete, vivid, impressive act they could not avoid His question about John by asking "What teaching?" and then beclouding the issue with fine distinctions. Moreover, the baptism of John had been an innovation. Since nothing like it had been commanded in the law, the same acute issue was faced: Did John have the right to set up an institution for the forgiveness of sins when the Old Testament plainly declared the sacrifices in the temple were to be offered for that purpose? Only on the ground that John was a prophet directly inspired to speak for God, as had been the case with Moses when he gave the law, was John justified in doing this. Whether their decision as to a reply resulted from an immediate, covert, desperate exchange of ideas by looks and whispers or by withdrawal and lengthy consideration, their public reply which was awaited by Jesus and the multitude left them utterly discomfited. They refused to answer the question as to whether the authority of John's baptism was from heaven or merely from men, but their refusal constituted the most humiliating kind of confession. And in thus admitting that they dared not answer the dilemma (their hypocritical statement, "we know not," was too thin to deceive any one), they showed that the nation knew, and they did not dare deny, that John had been sent with a message from heaven. (Studies in the Life of Christ)

### Neither Will I Tell You?

#### Why did Jesus refuse to give a straight answer to those who asked him why he acted as he did?

It was during Holy Week, while he was walking in the temple precincts in Jerusalem, that some representatives of the Sanhedrin, Israel's supreme court (comprising chief priests, scribes, or teachers of the law, and elders, as we are told in Mk 11:27), came to Jesus and asked him, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?" By "these things" they meant



not so much his teaching in the outer court but his cleansing of the temple, which had taken place the previous day. What right had he to put a stop to buying and selling within the bounds of the temple, or to forbid anyone to carry anything through the temple—to use the outer court as a short cut on their business errands? Many religious people might have agreed with him that the sacred area should not be turned into a bazaar, but a temple police force was stationed to protect its sanctity. Who authorized Jesus to act as he did?

His cleansing of the temple was what would have been recognized in Old Testament times as a prophetic action—the kind of action by which a prophet would occasionally confirm his spoken message and bring it home to the people around him. Jesus protested that the temple was being prevented from fulfilling its purpose as “a house of prayer for all nations” (see Is 56:7). Gentiles were not allowed to enter the inner courts, but in the outer court they might draw near to the true and living God and worship him, like those “Greeks” who, according to John 12:20, went up to worship at Passover. Because of this the outer court was sometimes called “the court of the Gentiles.” But Gentiles were hindered in using it for its proper purpose if space within it was taken up by market stalls and the like. One of the latest Old Testament prophets had foretold how, when representatives of all the nations were to go up to Jerusalem to worship, “there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day” (Zech 14:21 RSV). Jesus’ prophetic action was designed to enforce this lesson.

But by what authority did he perform such a prophetic action? By what authority did any of the ancient prophets perform prophetic actions? By the authority of God, in whose name they spoke to the people. So, when Jesus was asked, “Who gave you this authority?” the true answer was “God.” Why then did he not say so? Because his questioners would not have believed him. He tested them first with another question, to see if they were capable of recognizing divine authority when they saw it. Reminding them of John the Baptist’s ministry, he asked them whether John’s authority was derived “from heaven [that is, from God] or from men.” This put them on the spot: they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men?’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet” (Lk 20:6). Could they recognize divine authority when it was expressed in the actions and teaching of John? If so, they might be expected to recognize it when it was manifested in the deeds and words of Jesus. But they professed themselves unable to say what the source of John’s authority was. So Jesus said to them in effect, “If you cannot recognize divine authority when you see it in action, no amount of argument will convince you of its presence. If you cannot tell me by what authority John baptized, I will not tell you by what authority I do these things.” There are some people who will demand authority for truth itself, forgetting that truth is the highest authority. (Walter Kaiser, et al - go to page 451 in pdf - [Hard Sayings of the Bible](#))