

# JERUSALEM CONTROVERSIES



Lesson 9 for August  
31, 2024

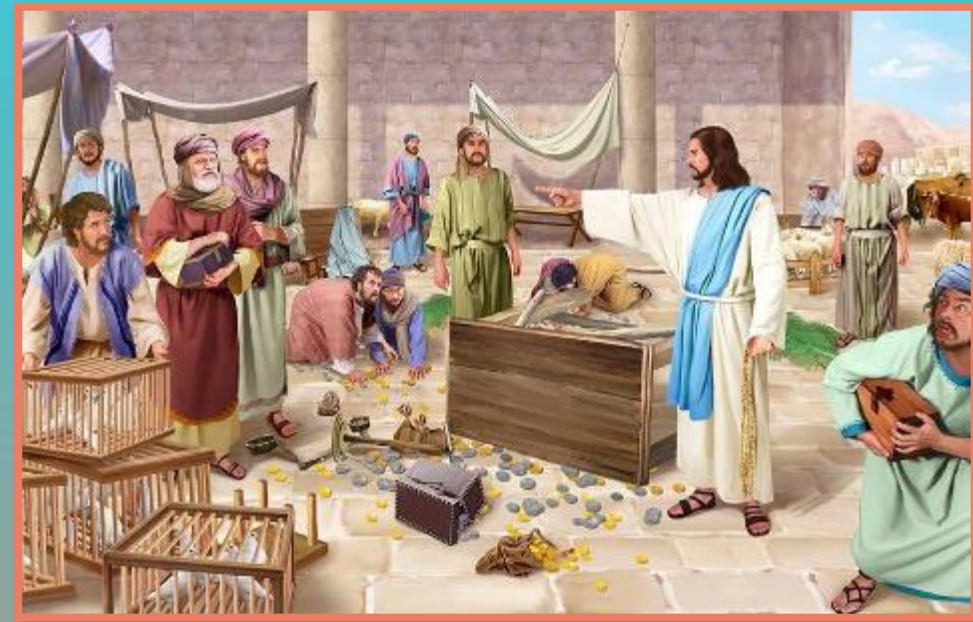


**"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses"**

**(Mark 11:25, NKJV)**

After allowing Bartimaeus to publicly recognize him as the Messiah, Jesus himself began to openly act as such. His first actions – entering Jerusalem as king and purifying the Temple – caused a wave of fear and indignation among the nation's leaders.

Once they had recovered from the initial shock, the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and scribes conspired to find something to hold onto to carry Jesus to the cross. But, on all these occasions, Jesus emerged victorious.



### **First day in Jerusalem:**



**Triumphant entrance. Mark 11:1-11.**



### **Second day in Jerusalem:**



**Curse and purification. Mark 11:12-26.**



### **Third day in Jerusalem:**



**The authority of Jesus. Mark 11:27-12:12.**



**Malicious questions. Mark 12:13-27.**



**A sincere question. Mark 12:28-34.**

# TRIUMPHANT ENTRANCE

**"Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna! "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9)**



**Jesus knew that there was a colt in Bethphage that he could use. He knew how to answer to his owners so his disciples could take it away (Mark 11:1-7). He knew that by imitating Solomon at his coronation, he was fulfilling Zechariah's messianic prophecy (1 Kings 1:33-34; Zech. 9:9).**

**It is evident that Jesus planned his exaltation. He wanted the people to recognize him as their king (Mark 11:8-10).**

**However, it did not precipitate events. Upon entering Jerusalem, he slipped through the crowd unnoticed, and silently entered the temple (Mark 11:11).**

**The Roman soldiers did not have to intervene. There was no attempt at rebellion. The Jewish leaders, filled with fear, breathed a sigh of relief when Jesus quietly left the Temple to return to Bethany.**

**But the spark was lit. Now Israel had to decide whether to accept Jesus or reject him.**

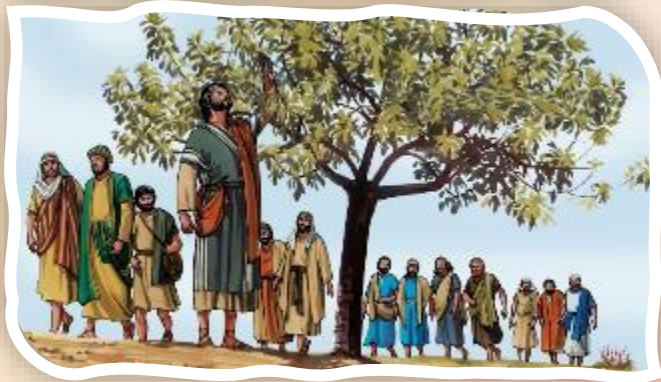


# CURSE AND PURIFICATION

"Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it" (Mark 11:14)

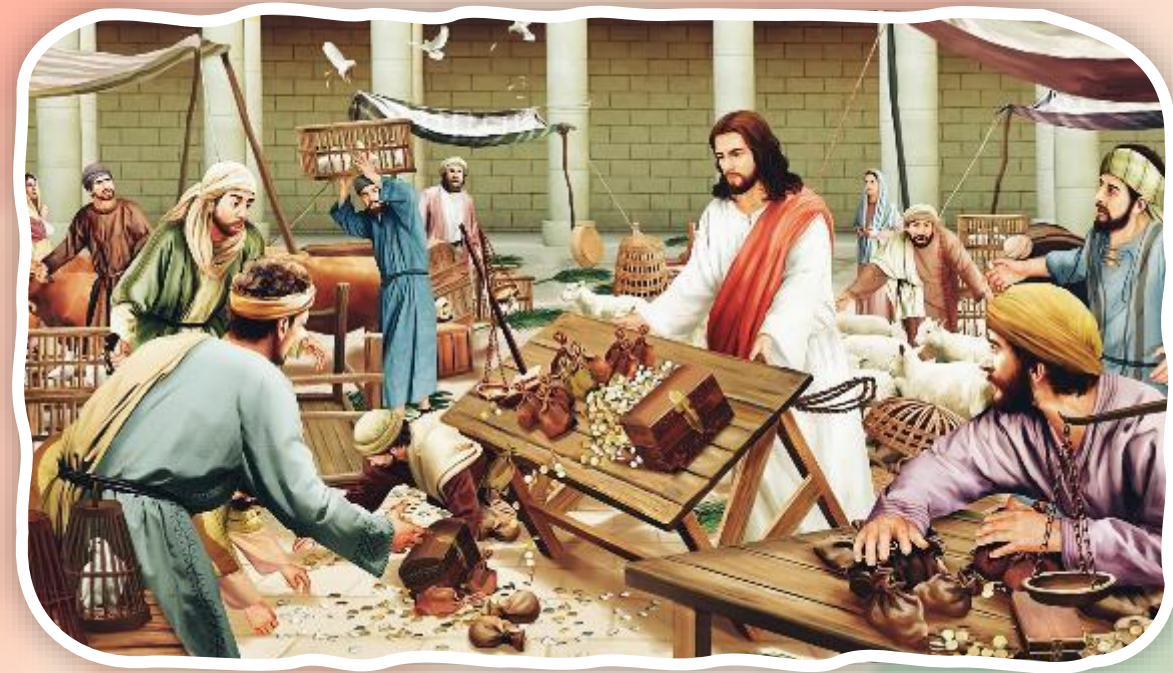
"On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves" (Mark 11:15)

Mark presents us with his fourth "sandwich story":



Mark 11:12-14  
Jesus curses the  
fig tree

Mark 11:15-19  
Jesus purifies the Temple



Mark 11:20-26  
Teachings from  
the dried fig tree



In the central part of the sandwich, Mark shows us God's purpose for his people. The story surrounding it [the fig tree] shows us how Israel acted.

# CURSE AND PURIFICATION

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## The Temple

[God's purpose]

He offered salvation for all  
(Mark 11:17a)

But it was corrupt  
(Mark 11:17b)

It was restored by Jesus  
(Mark 11:15-16)

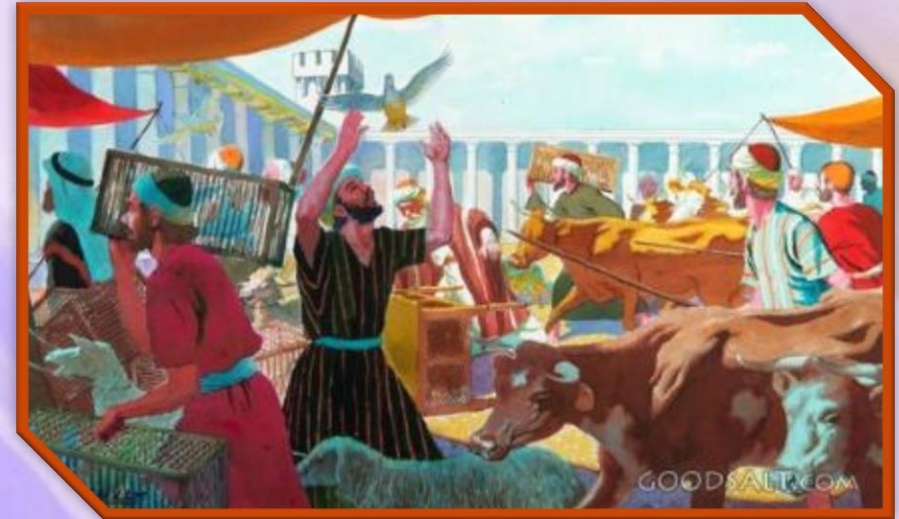
## The Fig Tree

[Israel performance]

Its leaves attracted  
(Mark 11:13a)

But it was not good for food  
(Mark 11:13b)

It was rejected by Jesus  
(Mark 11:20)



The plan of salvation is carried out through the Church. If the Church fails, God restores it. But those who corrupt the message of salvation and do not repent will be rejected.

# THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

**"By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?" (Mark 11:28)**



**No one dared to rebuke Jesus when he expelled the merchants from the Temple court. However, the next day they decided to publicly discredit him by asking him about his authority (Mark 11:27-28).**

**But Jesus also knew how to ask (Mark 11:29-30). Now the ball was in his court. Whether they accepted or rejected John's authority, they were to do the same with Jesus (Mark 11:31-33).**



**As the debate ended in a tie, Jesús went on to counterattack. Isaiah compared Israel to a vineyard from which God "expected judgment, and behold, vileness; righteousness, and here is a cry" (Isaiah 5:1-7). Jesus used the same figure to portray the attitude of the leaders (Mark 12:1-11). They saw themselves reflected in the parable, but were not willing to rectify their behavior (Mark 12:12).**





# MALICIOUS QUESTIONS

**"But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked" (Mark 12:15a)**

**In order to trap Jesus, the Pharisees and Herodians joined together. They were even willing to praise him, and make an apparent public recognition of his status as a teacher (Mark 12:13-14a).**

**The question was clearly malicious (Mark 12:14b). Admitting that they had to pay tribute meant being condemned by the people. To admit that they should not pay taxes was to be condemned by Rome.**

**But not only was he freed from all condemnation, but he clarified the true relationship between state and church: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:15-17).**





# MALICIOUS QUESTIONS

**"But he, perceiving their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you tempting me?" (Mark 12:15a)**



**It was the turn of the Sadducees to make Jesus look ridiculous. They used a parable that they commonly used to ridicule the Pharisees (Mark 12:18-23). Jesus revealed the two errors they were making (Mark 12:24-27):**

- 1. "you are ignorant of the Scriptures."  
Contrary to what his parable implied, the Bible teaches that our resurrected bodies will not be the same as the ones we now have ["they will be like the angels"]; and that life after the resurrection will not be a mere continuation of it ["neither shall they marry nor be given in marriage"].**
- 2. "you are ignorant...of the power of God."  
God can give life to the dead. Therefore, before Him all who accept Him are alive ["God is not God of the dead, but God of the living"].**

# A SINCERE QUESTION

*"One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

*(Mark 12:28)*

**Now it is a scribe who enters the controversy. But, unlike the previous ones, this one sees in Jesus a true teacher with whom it is worth dialoging (Mark 12:28).**

**Jesus answers his question about the most important commandment, and adds a "plus": the second most important commandment (Mark 12:29-31).**

**Excited by the conversation, the scribe summarizes Jesus' response, and adds his own conclusion: "loving [...] is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:32-33).**

**Jesus recognizes the man's sincerity, and invites him to take the step: you are close... you just need to accept me as your Savior (Mark 12:34a).**

**If they kept asking him, in the end Jesus would manage to convert even the scribes and Pharisees. Just in case, they stopped instigating him (Mark 12:34b).**



**“Scribes, priests, and rulers were all silenced. Baffled and disappointed, they stood with lowering brows, not daring to press further questions upon Christ. By their cowardice and indecision, they had in a great measure forfeited the respect of the people, who now stood by, amused to see these proud, self-righteous men defeated.**

**All these sayings and doings of Christ were important, and their influence was to be felt in an ever-increasing degree after His crucifixion and ascension. Many of those who had anxiously awaited the result of the questioning of Jesus were finally to become His disciples, first drawn toward Him by His words on that eventful day”.**

**EGW (The Desire of Ages, pg. 594)**