

Passion Narratives, class 4:

Cleansing the Temple, cursing the fig tree, the question of Jesus' authority

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE (Mt 21.12-17, Mk 11.15-17, Lk 19.45-46)

12 Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. **13** And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

14 Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant **16** and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise' [Ps 8.2]?" **17** Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

CURSING THE FIG TREE (Mt 21.18-22, Mk 11.11-14, 20-24)

Mt 21.18 Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. **19** And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. **20** And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

(1) Uselessness invites disaster.

(2) Profession of faith without practice is condemned.

Matt 21.21 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, 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 also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. **22** And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

THE QUESTION OF JESUS' AUTHORITY (Mt 21.23-27, Mk 11.27-33, Lk 20.1-8)

Mt 21.23 Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?”

24 But Jesus answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: **25** The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?”

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’

26 But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.” **27** So they answered Jesus and said, “We do not know.”

And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.