

Daily Bible Study

“A Sacred Place”

Mark 11:15 - 19

October 16– October 22, 2011

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY – As we continue to move along with Mark recording the days leading up to our Lord Jesus’ death and resurrection we come now to a text which contains the familiar story known as “Jesus cleansing the Temple”. The text is **Mark 11:15-19**. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record this incident and there are as usual things particular to each account. One of the interesting differences is found in the recording of Jesus words from the prophet Isaiah. In light of the cursing of the fig tree with its seeming reference to the nation of Israel it is interesting how Mark quotes the words of Jesus taken from **Isaiah 56:7** which include the phrase “*for all the nations.*” This is peculiar to Mark and easily understandable with Mark writing primarily to a Gentile readership. Matthew, writing primarily to Jews, leaves this out. This obvious “international” flavor continues in this story of the Temple cleansing. As Mark moves his record to its climax, we see some pretty hard and even threatening things directed toward those who refused to submit to and come to Jesus. The temple and the worship offered in it, (so much being hypocritical) represented the norm in Jewish life and religion. Like the previous passage where we saw the illustration of judgment in the fig tree, there is now another picture here in the Temple of God’s judgment on the nation. **Mark 11:15- 19** “*So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. When evening had come, He went out of the city.*”

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father God, teach and feed me from Your Word this week. Help me to not be lazy and hypocritical in my worship of and obedience toward You.

TUESDAY –Before we look into the text, some history concerning the Temple from BakerNTC: “In order to grasp the meaning of the temple cleansing and of many other New Testament references to this building, note the following *main* facts: It was David who conceived in his heart to build a temple for the Lord. But for the reason stated in 1 Chronicles 28:3 not to David but to his son Solomon was given the privilege to build it. He began to do so in the fourth year of his

reign, hence in or about the year 969 B.C. See 1 Kings 6:1. It was finished seven years later (1 Kings 6:38). Cedar and cypress wood from Lebanon, and white hard limestone were used in its construction. Because the level area of Moriah, on which it was built, was too small, the foundation had to be laid very deep and the space between hilltop and outer wall filled in. For an account of the furniture of this temple and of the manner in which it was dedicated see 1 Kings 6–8. This temple experienced stress and strain. In the course of the centuries it was plundered, renovated, desecrated, purged. See 1 Kings 14:26; 15:18; 2 Kings 14:14; 15:35; 16:17 f.; 23:4 f. Its treasures were carried to Babylon (2 Kings 24:13). Finally, about the year 586 B.C. the Chaldean army destroyed Jerusalem, including Solomon’s beautiful temple. About fifty years later, at the return of a remnant from Babylonian captivity, an altar for a new temple was immediately built (Ezra 3:3). Sometime later work was begun in earnest on the building itself. It was completed about twenty years after the return. However, since it became clear that it would not be nearly as imposing and beautiful a structure as that of Solomon, the older people, who had known that first building, wept (Ezra 3:12, 13). It was this temple that was plundered and desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. Approximately three years later it was cleansed and rededicated by Judas Maccabaeas. Pompey captured and entered this temple but did not destroy it. However, Crassus deprived it of its treasures in 54, 53 B.C. Herod the Great altered and enlarged the temple complex. He expanded and beautified it to such an extent that the result could be called a new temple, though devout Jews probably refused to consider it such. In an eloquent address to the people the king, if we can trust Josephus, divulged his plan “to make a thankful return, after the most pious manner, to God, for the blessings I have received from him, who has given me this kingdom, and to do this by making his temple as complete as I am able.” He began to build it about the year 19 B.C. Long after his death it had not yet been entirely completed. See John 2:20. The grandeur and beauty of the temple which Herod started to build and on which he had made very considerable progress is evident from Mark 13:1, 2; cf. Matthew 24:1, 2; Luke 21:5, 6. See also Matthew 4:5; Luke 4:9. It is interesting to note that this elaborate structure was not finished until ... just a few years before it was destroyed by the Romans, A.D. 70.”

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me remember Your plan and design for worship that I see illustrated in the Temple. Thanks for making me and teaching me from Sacred Scripture that I am Your Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Peter 2:5).

WEDNESDAY – **Mark 11:15- 16** “So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of themoney changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.” As our text begins we see Jesus arriving at Jerusalem and going into the Temple; His Temple if you will. That is an incredible reality for us to ponder for a time.

Jesus Christ, as Lord God in the flesh, owner of all things goes into the Temple; a place where His worship is to be the primary and central thing taking place. He, the Holy God deserves all the worship that any and every human being would or could ever offer (**Psalms 99:5, 9**). As the title of our lesson suggests to us, this place of worship was to be “**A Sacred Place**”. The word here for temple, *hieron* means exactly that, “a sacred place” and it comes from a word which speaks of holiness and consecration to God. Jesus enters the Temple and begins to *drive out those who bought and sold in the temple*. **Zechariah 14:21** has an interesting phrase in it where the prophet records “*In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.*” Besides being a ethnic designation the word *Canaanite* also means merchant, trader. Jesus also *overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves*. We know from Biblical and non-biblical history that the leaders of the Temple were charging the pilgrims coming to worship an exorbitant amount to change their currency into the proper excepted currency to pay their Temple tax. And the priests would most likely find fault with the animals brought by the people and thus force them to purchase an animal there to sacrifice and raise the prices horribly to make money. Finally, Jesus took issue *and He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple*. The Temple was being used as a shortcut between the city and The Mount of Olives and Jesus would have no part of The Lord’s house being used as some sort of thruway or expressway. It had obviously lost its designation as a place for the nations to come worship YHWH.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, forgive me for so often using the worship gathering of God’s people for my own personal gain rather than focusing all my attention on You.*

THURSDAY – Mark 11:17 “*Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”* As mentioned earlier these words of Jesus are a quotation from Isaiah 56:7. It is interesting to note that the universal love of God is seen here in the *all nations*’. Matthew writing to primarily Jewish readers left this portion of Christ’s words off in his record. Jesus not only quotes Isaiah in this verse but also Jeremiah from **Jeremiah 7:11**. This is from a prophetic sermon that dealt with faithless rituals and religious superstition. This irreverent and indifferent religion as a big business and a maker of large profits had taken the place of true, quiet, prayer and worship of all the nations gathered together in the house of the Lord.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to worship You from a pure and sincere heart that is not being dominated and detoured by other gods which can't save or satisfy.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Mark 11:18 “*And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. When evening had come, He went out of the city.*” What had happened in this day was that wealthy families controlled the office of High Priest rather than a family position that was related to Aaron. The leadership of God’s people had become corrupt and in this case the offices were sold by the Romans to the highest bidder. Money and power were running the house of worship and when Jesus went after them and their profits He became enemy #1. Not only was His call to repentance and holiness too much for these men to follow but He went too far with them when he addressed their bank accounts. They are deeply affected, afflicted, and filled with resentment toward Jesus so they now more than ever look for a way to bring about His death. They can’t go right out in plain sight and kill Him because *all the people were astonished at His teaching*. These guys also no doubt remembered the Hosannas of the crowds on the previous day, in honor of Jesus. The words *sought how they might destroy Him* and *for they feared Him* are in the imperfect tense. These are verbs that refer to actions started and continued without speaking of recorded completion. These guys went out to kill Jesus and kept at it until He was dead later this very week. In their eyes Jesus fate was sealed after The Triumphal Entry and the cleansing of the temple. What is so AWESOME is that HE KNEW IT WOULD. Jesus was in control of this plan Beloved not some adrenaline filled sinful religious but lost men. They were controlled by sin, self and their pride and self-righteousness while The Righteous One preached, spoke and acted boldly in humility and truth for the Glory of His Father. May we by God’s grace live the same today. *When evening had come, He went out of the city.* We could describe the end of our text this way as one commentator did; “The battle lines are now quite clearly drawn, and Jesus and the Twelve leave the city for the night”. We’ll see this lesson of coming judgment will continue as the text moves on.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for Your love expressed to me in the Gospel. Jesus, thank You for Your righteous life that You lived in my behalf and for Your sacrificial death in my place. Holy Spirit, thank You for convicting me of my sin and bringing life to me dead soul.