

The King of Israel displays His power

Matthew 21 vv.18-22.

Mark 11 vv.12-14.

It is Monday morning, and evidently still very early. Along the road from Bethany to Jerusalem a little group of men is walking towards the city. Who are those men? ... O, you have guessed already, have you not? ... It is the Lord Jesus with His disciples.

They have passed the night in Bethany, in the home of Martha, but before the time of the morning meal Jesus has already departed.

Now there is no sound of rejoicing and singing like the day before. Yesterday He had been jostled by a large and enthusiastic multitude, but now He is alone with His disciples. Yesterday He rode upon the foal of an ass over the garments which had been cast before Him in the way; but now He walks alone with His disciples calmly along the familiar road.

Doubtless the disciples were thinking about the previous day. What a difference from today. The joy and happiness which filled them the previous day has gone and has perhaps even made room for dejection. How differently it had all gone from what they had expected.

Calmly the Saviour walks on. All of a sudden He walks up to one of the fig trees growing at the side of the road. He is hungry and wants to pick one of the figs to eat. But in spite of a search, He finds not one fruit among the leaves.

Thereupon the Lord Jesus pronounces a curse upon that fig tree. Just read what God's Word tells us: "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever." Now why does the Lord Jesus do this? Should He do such a thing? Surely the tree did not belong to Him? ... Moreover it was not even the time of year to find figs.

Then surely it was to be expected that the Lord Jesus should find no fruit on the tree?

Now just listen very carefully. When the Jews gathered in the fruit of the fields, then they were not supposed to do so completely. There was to be a gleaning left in the field or on the trees. This was for the widows and orphans, or for the poor.

Now, some say that the owner of that fig tree had indeed plucked all the fruit because he was too mean to leave anything for the poor, and that is why the Lord Jesus, as a punishment, cursed the tree.

Whatever the reason however, the tree withers at once at the Word of the

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The disciples hear their Master curse the tree. The Lord Jesus however has already walked on and the others follow Him. Very soon afterwards they enter Jerusalem and at once the Lord makes His way to the temple.

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Matthew 21 vv.12 and 13.  
Mark 11 vv.15-19.  
Luke 19 vv.45-48

See Him step within the outer court of the Lord's house. Suddenly He stands still. He is filled with indignation.

Why is that? ... Well, just look! Is this the house of prayer? ... It does not look like it. It is more like a busy market place. Merchants are selling passover lambs to the many strangers. One tries to cry and shout louder than the next. Here and there sit money-changers, who exchange foreign money for Jewish. How shameful!

How irreverent! Has this got to take place in the Courts of God's house? ... Surely there is plenty of room without? ...

Is it surprising that the Lord Jesus drives out all these noisy people in holy wrath? ... He overturns the tables of the money changers; the buyers and sellers He drives out of the Courts of God's house.

This is the second time that the Lord Jesus cleansed the temple. Three years before He had done the same thing. Can you still remember that? ...

In a voice full of righteous indignation He says: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

None dares to resist Jesus. Not one refuses to leave. They themselves may not know why, but they obey at once.

It is not long before peace is restored within the temple. So it should be, should it not? ... Of course!

May you also take a lesson from this example, children.

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Do you see those Scribes and Pharisees standing over there? ... Their eyes glint with wrath; they clench their fists. They are annoyed about the action of the Lord Jesus. They have heard what has taken place. O, how dare He do such a thing! That has nothing to do with Him, they think. They can take care of the peace and quiet of the temple. They do not need His help. Whom does He think He is?

They talk about Him scornfully. O, how they want to murder this Jesus of

Nazareth. If they could but beat Him to death or stone Him, then they would be rid of Him.

Well then, you leaders of the Jewish people, do just that! Take Jesus prisoner then. Drag Him from the temple and stone Him?

No, they do no such thing. They dare not kill Jesus. Dare not? ... How so? ... They dare not, because Jesus is surrounded by a large crowd. They are all listening with wrapt attention to the words of the words of the Saviour. The Pharisees and ~~scribes~~ <sup>Scribes</sup> know very well that the people would come to the defence of the Great Prophet of Nazareth. The multitude would not allow Jesus to be put to death. And that is why those angry leaders dare not touch Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus would not meet death by force or of necessity, but of His own free will.

What did the Lord Jesus do that Monday among other things? ... Well, He taught the people throughout the day in the temple. He preached!

But when at last evening falls, Jesus leaves the temple, yes, He leaves the city and returns again to Bethany.

There He is among friends, who love Him with all their soul. There He is not surrounded by hatred and envy. There He has a home, for there is one thing you must not forget: the Lord Jesus is also a Man, truly human, and He had just as much need of love as we have.

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Mark 11 vv. 20-26.

The next morning, that is Tuesday morning, as soon as the sun has risen, the Lord Jesus sets out again for Jerusalem. Again He walks with His disciples along that road from Bethany.

Suddenly the disciples stop and look full of amazement at a tree, a fig tree, which stands at the side of the road completely withered. Not only the leaves but even the roots are dead.

They recognise this tree. It is the very one which only the day before stood green and fresh, but which had been cursed by their Master because no fruit was to be found on its branches.

Peter points out the withered tree to the Lord Jesus and says: "Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away."

Through this incident the Lord Jesus displays that He is in truth the Son of God, the Ruler of heaven and earth.

He tells them that, if they believe in Him, they will, through that faith, move mountains. Nothing, then, will be too wonderful for them.

The Lord Jesus had more to say at that time, but that is rather difficult for you still.

Thus, conversing among themselves they reach Jerusalem and enter into the city. But what took place upon that Tuesday I hope to tell you in the following chapters.

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