



**Was Jesus Political? Part 2**  
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**The Crossing Church**  
**Las Vegas, Nevada**

### **OPENING**

This week we are continuing the 4<sup>th</sup> Section of Quest 52, The Passion of Jesus. In Week 41, our author, Mark makes a point using a literary sandwich: a fig tree – the temple- the fig tree again. Of all the events that happened after Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem Mark stresses these three events.

### **SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>**

**Mark 11:12-25** The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 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 he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it. 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, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’” The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city. In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!” “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

**Matthew 11:28** Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

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<sup>1</sup> The NIV translation unless otherwise indicated.

## **OBSERVATION**

It was too early for figs, but most trees would have been in bud - not worth eating yet. **Point 1)** The tree Jesus approached didn't even have buds and was not fulfilling its purpose so Jesus cursed it and shut it down. **Point 2)** The temple was a place to connect with God – a place to worship - but it had been turned into a religious rite for financial gain as people bought and sold animals for sacrifices. The poor were taken advantage of because they didn't have animals to give. For those who wanted to sacrifice for sin were being undermined by the religious leaders as they cheated the people - so Jesus shut them down. In 70 A. D., just 30 years after Jesus prophesied about the temple being destroyed, the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem and no stone of the temple was left standing. This began the diaspora of the dispersing of the Jews from their homeland. Not until 1948, was it restored. **Point 3)** The disciples were watching all of this: Jesus cursed the fig tree then He overturned the money-changers' tables and finally they passed the dead fig tree. The fig tree promised one thing but, just like the temple, didn't deliver. **Both show the destiny of a fruitless nation because of their rejection of their Messiah.**<sup>2</sup>

## **APPLICATION**

The only sign that should hang outside church is "Welcome home all who are tired, broken, depressed, anxious and hurting." Prodigals and doubters and wanderers and skeptics and all with questions can come and find truth in Jesus. He promises that He will always come for us and rescue us. He is a determined Father who keeps His promises and rolls away a stone to reveal life and bring freedom.

**QUESTION: Which of God's promises are you trusting Him to keep for you?**

Many people believe that there are many ways to God. There are religious and faith practices from Buddha to Muhammed to Joseph Smith and blends of spirituality, crystals or motivational statements that will make our heads spin in confusion. Other religions don't deliver any more than the fig tree or the temple did. Only Jesus delivers. He was raised from the dead and no other religion's followers can say that about their leader. But Jesus says, "**I AM the way – the only way.**" He isn't saying, "I am one of many ways."

**QUESTION: How are you reacting to Jesus' statement that He is the only way to His Father?**

**QUESTION: Which of your friends believe that good people, even though they don't believe in Jesus, should go to heaven? How can you help them to understand what Jesus is saying?**

Jesus speaks of the power of prayer when we approach God. Even mountains move under prayers' urging if we believe they can. Often what we pray for using our own understanding is answered in a much more perfect way when God answers in His wisdom.

**QUESTION: When have you prayed for your perfect resolution to a problem and then realized that God's answer was so much more encompassing and perfect?**

He promised to remain with us always and actually lives within every believer today; He gives us strength and wisdom through His Spirit; He forgives our sins when we repent and relieves that burden of shame from us; He is our Advocate before Father God because His sacrifice on the Cross paid for our sin.

**QUESTION: What shame has been lifted from you because Jesus said, "Come to Me and I will give you rest?"**

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<sup>2</sup> Mark E. Moore. Quest 52. Waterbrook Publishing, 2021. Page 265.

The Kingdom of God is the temple of Christ, where true worship and sacrifice are performed. This is the epicenter of the politics of Jesus. A new nation of people whose citizenship is in heaven even as we spread His fame to every corner of the earth.<sup>3</sup>

**QUESTION: What is God's purpose for you today? How are you fulfilling your part in achieving that purpose?**

#### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we know that You have a purpose for each of us who loves and believes in You. Please help us to listen for clarity of purpose as we meditate on Your Word and look to our future in ministry to others. If we are apathetic in following Your urgings, help us to persevere until we are strong and obedient for the time is near when You will return and we don't want to be found wanting. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **QUESTIONS**

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**QUESTION: How are you reacting to Jesus' statement that He is the only way to His Father?**

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. page 268