

Holy Week and God's Plan of Salvation

Monday and Tuesday: The Authority of Jesus

Questions to think about while we go through this study:

1. How does Jesus cursing the fig tree show Jesus' authority?
2. How does Jesus clearing out the temple show His authority?
3. Why is Jesus' authority important for our salvation?

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

This story may seem a little strange, but it has a meaning for us. Read the first part of the story in Mark 11:12-14 (1273). What was Jesus looking for? Did He find any?

Fig trees normally begin growing leaves in March/April and don't grow figs until June. Jesus and His disciples were in Jerusalem in March or early April. What did Jesus say to the tree? Does that seem right?

Now look ahead and read Mark 11:20-21. What happened to the fig tree?

There are two possible meanings for this story.

1. Jesus gives one meaning in Mark 11:22-25. The disciples were amazed that the fig tree dried up and died so fast. But Jesus said we should have faith and we will receive what we pray for. How is this related to salvation? (Hint: what is one of the most important things to pray for, verse 25?)
2. The Bible often says that our good works are like a tree growing fruit. Should we "grow fruit" (do good works) only at certain times, or should we do good works all the time? What is Jesus saying about the Jews here?

For comparison, read Luke 13:6-8 (1311). How is this related to salvation?

Jesus Clears the Temple

Read Mark 11:15-18 (1273). There were two main groups of people in the temple courtyard (the area outside the temple). One group sold animals that people could use for sacrifice in the temple. The second group exchanged money. The Jews required “temple money” for offerings and gifts. Normal money was not accepted and must be exchanged. What did Jesus do to these two groups?

Think about this related to salvation: Why did these people make Jesus upset? (Hint: what was the purpose of the temple? Were these people following that purpose?)

The Jewish Leaders Challenge Jesus

Read Mark 11:27-33. The Jewish leaders challenged Jesus with a question. They asked where Jesus got authority for His teaching. Jesus first asked them a question about John’s authority. Did the Jews know where John got his authority? Did they know where Jesus got His authority? Did they really care?

Why do you think Jesus refused to answer their question?

Who gave Jesus His authority, His right to teach and do miracles?

How is that related to our salvation? If Jesus had no authority, could He still die to save us from our sins?