

Nothing But Thieves

“Wit of the staircase”

Mark 11:1-11 – triumphal entry – (*Sunday*)

- 1-3: the colt... (foreknowledge + poverty)
- 4-6: just as Jesus said
- 7-10: *Hosanna*
- 11: He enters Jerusalem...looks at Temple (inspects) – Rv.2-3; 2 Co.5

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Mark 11:12-26 – (Monday)

A 'fig'-urative lesson

- 12-14: fig tree: false advertising (leaves)
- 15-17: temple: false advertising (thieves)

Jn.2:14-17 – effect of first cleanup did not last

- 18-19: *reaction of people* explains why Jewish officials feared Jesus

People were amazed at His teaching
...but not at the scribes

Mark 11:20-26 – (*Tuesday*)

The day after He cleansed the Temple

The fig tree is withered

— Mk.11:27-33 —

Mark 11:27

- Jerusalem: like the fig, warm welcome for Messiah, but...days later, His death
- Walking in the temple
- Chief priests, Scribes, Elders – 8:31, Supreme Court – formal delegation...
 - Chief priests: heads of 24 courses; wealthy Sadducees
 - Scribes: Mk.7:1, professional scholars
 - Elders: Mk.7:5, traditions equal to the Law
- Came to Jesus... Why?

Mark 11:28

- By what authority?
 - “Jesus is not a real rabbi...” – Mk.1:22
 - “Jesus simply appeared and started teaching...”
- These things?
 - Entered Jerusalem as a king; attacked the temple
- “Who gave you this authority?”
 - All authority comes from some source
 - Who gave authority to Jesus? [Jn.2:18]

Mark 11:29

- He answers a question with a question
 - One answer may settle the dispute
 - His reply puts them in a dilemma –
 - They must answer or be exposed as hypocrites

Mark 11:30

- **Baptism of John:** from heaven or men?
 - People: “John is a prophet”
 - Sanhedrin had not challenged popular conviction of John
- **From heaven:** authorized by God Himself.
 - If they admit this, then John was a prophet with a divine commission to preach repentance-baptism (Is.40:1-3).
 - John (inspired prophet) declared Jesus to be the Messiah – Jn.1:29-37; 5:33-35. [Ac.5]
- **From men:** John conceived own baptism?

Mark 11:31

- They reasoned...
- Among themselves. Lk.20:5
 - Damage control
 - They rejected John – a prophet of God
- “If”-ing before answering – dishonest
 - If they believe John, they must believe in Jesus as John did.
 - They admit they rejected John, and therefore, God Himself Who sent John

Mark 11:32

- If we say “From men” – fear the people...
 - Mt.21:23, ‘as He was teaching’
- If Jews were incompetent to judge John’s authority, they were even more incompetent to judge the Lord’s.
- If Jews deny John’s divine mission, they may be in some danger of losing all their influence...or their lives.
 - Lk.20:6
 - Jn.8:58-59

Mark 11:33

- These learned men confess ignorance.
- Politicians put their finger to the wind.
- Teachers of Israel pronounced the multitude accursed for its ignorance (Jn.7:49); now they admit they are in the same condition.
- Why should Jesus answer their Q? (If they reject John's testimony to His Messiahship, His own testimony will not convince them.)
 - Lord's authority is same that sent John.
- Explains His silence (Mk.14:60-61)

Consequences of “We do not know”

- Some experts!
- Their ignorance does not correct Jesus; it exalts Him.
- Hard to imagine their public embarrassment.

Consequences of “We do not know”

1. Their counsel: did not seek truth, but a way out of a trap.
2. Their course: take the fifth.
3. Their cowardice: save face before the people.
4. Their concern: consequences, not truth.
5. Their character: stubborn mind, evil motives.

So what? (1)

1. Jewish council feared only one thing more than the wrath of the crowd – the truth.
2. Jewish council was more concerned about consequences than truth. They lacked the courage of their convictions. They were deceitful.
3. Religious people often say right words, but do not intend to obey truth.
4. Hebrew proverb: 'Learn to say I do not know.'
[Good advice... if you really do not know.
Satanic advice to cover dishonesty.]

So what? (2)

5. Even Gentiles could see truth in Jesus that scholarly Jews missed. Mt.8:5-10, Centurion; 15:21-28, Syro-Phoenician. (Jn.9:29-30, blind.)
6. 'If'-ing of religious authorities shows . . .
 - a. dishonest hearts; unconcern for their souls
 - b. fear of consequences, not love of truth
 - c. desire to win argument, not to learn truth
 - d. desire to save face, not souls
 - e. incompetence as spiritual leaders
 - f. jealousy, hatred, prejudice, agnosticism.