

May 8

The Temple's Mountain Begins to Move

Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?
Behold, I, even I, have seen it, says Yahweh – Jeremiah 7:11

[Mark 11:12-25, Bethany and Jerusalem, Monday and Tuesday] The next day, when they had come out from Bethany, as he returned to the city he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree afar off by the road having leaves, he came to see if perhaps he might find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing on it but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. Jesus told it, **“May no one ever eat fruit from you again!”** and his disciples heard it.

They came to Jerusalem, and Jesus entered into the temple, and began to throw out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of those who sold the doves. He would not allow anyone to carry a container through the temple. He taught, saying to them, **“Isn't it written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations?’ [Isaiah 56:7] But you have made it a den of robbers!”** [Jeremiah 7:11]

The chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy him. For they feared him, because all the multitude was astonished at his teaching. The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children who were crying in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the son of David!” they were indignant, and said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?”

Jesus said to them, **“Yes. Did you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing babies you have perfected praise?’”** [Psalm 8:2]

Jesus entered into the temple, and began to throw out those who sold

He was teaching daily in the temple, but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people sought to destroy him. They couldn't find what they might do, for all the people hung on to every word that he said. Every day Jesus was teaching in the temple, and every night he would go out and spend the night on the mountain that is called Olivet. All the people came early in the morning to him in the temple to hear him.

When evening came, he went out of the city. As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. Peter, remembering, said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered away.” The disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree immediately* wither away?” [*Perhaps withering began Monday.]

Jesus answered them, **“Have faith in God. If you have faith, and don't doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree. For most certainly I tell you, whoever may tell this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and doesn't doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is happening; he shall have whatever he says. Therefore I tell you, all things whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received them, and you shall have them. Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father, who is in heaven, may also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your transgressions.”** [Matthew 21:10-22*, Luke 19:45-48, 21:37-38] *Matthew puts the cursing, withering, and noticing all together (on Tuesday). Matthew occasionally breaks chronology to join themes.

1. What does a fig tree represent? Does it relate to temple cleansing and mountain moving?
2. What irked the priests and scribes? Can you relate? How will you avoid their indignance?
3. Jesus, you were indignant about the temple, but my indignance is misplaced, please...