

WEEK 5 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – MARK 11:12-14:2 (Hearts and Minds)

1) (**Read Mark 11:12-25**) In Mark 11 Jesus curses a barren fig tree (vv. 12-14), cleanses the temple (vv. 15-19), and then returns to the fig tree (vv. 20-25). The way Mark organizes his material in these passages (fig tree/temple cleansing/fig tree) suggests a connection between these two events. **What might that connection be?**¹ (see Jeremiah 8:8-13 and Micah 7:1-4 for further insight).

COMMENTATOR’S NOTE: “Mark’s parenthetical statement “it was not the season for figs” alerts the reader/hearer to look for **symbolic meaning** (such parenthetical statements are an ... element of Markan style; cf. 1:16, 5:42; 7:3-4; 13:14). The statement may be therefore be an allusion to Micah 7:1 and/or Jeremiah 8:13” (James Brooks).

2) **Follow Up Question:** Assuming that the fig tree represents the people of Israel (and in light of the Old Testament passages referenced above), what do we learn about their practices at the time?

3) (**Review Mark 11:20-25**) “I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24). Some have mistakenly taken these words from Jesus to mean that as long as enough faith is mustered up, God will answer any prayer request. But we must always have the same perspective that Jesus had – that is, confidence in God’s power but also submission to his will (see Mark 14:36). **How should we understand Jesus’ words, then, in Mark 11:24? (see James 4:3 and 1 John 5:14-15).**

¹ Ortlund and Packer, 60.

4) **(Read Mark 12:1-12)** What do the various elements of the parable in Mark 12:1-12 signify – the tenants, the vineyard, the servants, the son of the vineyard owner, and the vineyard owner? (See Isaiah 5:1-7). How does this parable develop what has already been happening in Mark 11:12-25?²

5) **(Read Mark 12:38-44)** In the final two accounts of Mark 12, Jesus contrasts two different kinds of piety. One kind is seen in 12:38-40 and the other is seen in 12:41-44. **What is the difference between the two? What is Jesus teaching his disciples through these contrasting examples?**³

6) **(Read Mark 13)** In response to Jesus' statement about the future destruction of the temple (13:2), the disciples ask him, "when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" Jesus' answer deals primarily with the second part of their question ("what will be the sign"), but he also addresses the timing of coming events ("when"). Verses 5-23 focus on local and world events (destruction of the temple, persecution, and universal evangelism); vv. 24-27 focus on cosmic events (the transformation of the known cosmos and the coming of the Son of Man). The disciples assume that the destruction of the temple will coincide with the end of time, but Jesus corrects their thinking (vv. 7, 13). **As you glance over Mark 13:4-37, what do you think might be the central point Jesus wants to get across?**

² Ibid., 61.

³ Ibid., 62.

7) (**Review Mark 13:9-13**) In Mark 13:9-13, identify three hardships Jesus foretells and three comforts he provides as he encourages his disciples to be faithful witnesses to the nations.

WEEK 5 APPLICATION QUESTIONS (Hands and Feet)

8) (**Review Mark 13:9-13**) Verses 9-13 describe some of the persecution the apostles will face as they spread the good news. Have you ever faced persecution for your faith? What happened?

9) (**Read Mark 13:32-37**) In this passage, Jesus tells His disciples to be on guard and stay awake in anticipation of His coming. In light of His teaching, what might staying awake spiritually look like for Christian men today? In light of Matthew 24:36-51, what might falling asleep look like?

WEEK 6: WHOLE-BIBLE CONNECTIONS (Mark 14-16)

(These will provide further insight into our Scripture reading and discussion questions)

1) The Passover Lamb: Mark 14 bristles with connections to the Passover event that is recorded in the book of Exodus. The Israelites celebrated Passover every year since their liberation from Egyptian captivity, a liberation that took place through the shed blood of a lamb. During the last of the ten plagues God sent on Egypt, in which God killed the firstborn of every Egyptian family, the angel of God “passed over” any Israelite houses that were marked with a lamb’s blood. Picking up on this event, Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples in anticipation of the greatest liberation, in which another lamb was slain to save those who take refuge under its blood

(see also 1 Pet 1:19). Revelation picks up on this theme, exulting in those who have conquered “by the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 12:11; note also Rev. 5:6; 7:14; 13:8; 22:1-3).⁴

2) A Garden: The Bible opens with God’s people in a garden containing a river and a fruit-bearing tree of life (Gen. 2:9-10) and closes with God’s new people in a garden-city that likewise contains a river and a fruit-bearing tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2). Along the way, we see a hope for a restored garden in which God will once more dwell in happy fellowship with his people (Isa. 51:3; 58:11; Ezek. 36:35). How does the first garden, in which mankind plunged through sin into ruin and death, culminate in a restored garden, in which God’s people enjoy restored fellowship with him? Only because at the pinnacle of all human history, in another garden called Gethsemane, the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) [submitted to God’s will and] was arrested and led off to be killed (Mark 14:32-50).⁵

WEEK 6 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – MARK 14:3-16:8 (Hearts and Minds

The Passion and Empty Tomb Narratives (14:3-16:8)

1) **(Read Mark 14:3-9)** A denarius was a day’s wage for a worker, so when the woman (probably Mary the sister of Lazarus) in Mark 14:3-9 breaks an alabaster jar and pours over Jesus’ head nard worth more than three hundred denarii, she is squandering almost a year’s salary for a worker. Despite the protests on some who are there, Jesus does not object to what this woman has done. Why not?⁶

2) **(Read Mark 14:12-25)** To understand Mark 14:12-25 we must understand the Passover meal Jesus is sharing with his disciples. Read Exodus 12:1-14 to learn the history of the very first Passover meal. List 3 specific actions God told each Israelite family to take in these verses,

⁴ Ortlund and Packer, 80.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid., 76.

paying special attention to the symbols that help us see the significance of Jesus' impending death.⁷

3) (**Review Mark 14:22-25**) What does Jesus say the bread and wine represent?⁸ In light of passages like Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 9:11-15, describe some benefits of the New Covenant that are given to all who become children of God through faith in Jesus (cf. Gal. 3:26).

4) (**Read Mark 14:32-35**) John 18:1 tells us that Gethsemane was "a garden," and in our study we have learned that Jesus is the True and better Adam (see section entitled "Son of God"). What happened as the result of (the first man) Adam's disobedience in a garden (Eden), and what does this tell us about the results to come from the last Adam's obedience in this garden?

5) (**Read Mark 14:66-72**) How does Peter's denial of Jesus (Mark 14:66-72) advance the narrative of the final days of Jesus' life? That is, what do we learn about what Jesus suffered in these days?⁹

⁷ Keller, 93-94.

⁸ Ortlund and Packer, 77.

⁹ Ortlund and Packer, 78.

6) According to both Jewish and Roman custom, Jesus had to be taken outside the city walls to be crucified. What might be the theological significance of this, in light of other passages in the Bible such as Exodus 29:14, Leviticus 16:27, and Hebrews 13:11-12?¹⁰

7) (**Review Mark 15:21-36**) Many Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in the death of Jesus as recounted in Mark 15. Read Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Psalm 22, and Isaiah 53, and jot down connections between these Old Testament passages and what takes place in Mark 15, especially in vv. 21-36.¹¹

8) (**Review Mark 15:37-39**) Read Hebrews 10:19-25. What is the significance of the curtain of the temple being torn in two, from top to bottom, and how does this event affect the way Christians relate to God and one another?¹²

9) Along with Luke, Mark emphasizes the role of women in the final week of Jesus' life (Mark 15:40-41, 47; 16:1ff.) What might be the reason for this?¹³

¹⁰ Ortlund and Packer, 84.

¹¹ Ortlund and Packer, 85.

¹² Keller, 107.

¹³ Ortlund and Packer, 86.

WEEK 6 APPLICATION QUESTIONS (Hands and Feet)

10) Which insights/applications have impacted you most from this study?

11) **THE STORY CONTINUES:** Read Acts 1:1-2, 9:3-5, and 13:44-50 (cf. Isaiah 49:5-6). In these verses we learn not only that Jesus identifies with His church (“why are you persecuting me”), but that Paul identifies himself and his companions with the mission of God’s Messiah. What do these verses tell us about the purpose of our lives today? Name one or two specific areas in which this study has challenged you to pick up your cross and follow Jesus.