

# THE SURPRISING JESUS

Studies in the Book of Mark

## ~Week Fifteen~ “Jesus vs. Religion” Mark 11:27-33



Life Groups

**A reminder...** This weekly Bible study is connected to the Sunday sermons at UPC. It includes a “Look Back” section to help you reflect on last Sunday’s sermon, and a “Look Up” section to take you through the NEXT passage in the book of Mark. If you miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at [www.upc-orlando.com](http://www.upc-orlando.com).

**Note...** Observant users of this Bible study may wonder why we are skipping the account of the Triumphal Entry (Mark 11:1-10). We already covered this section of Mark’s gospel in Week Three, on Palm Sunday. In case you missed it, the lesson can be found at [www.upc-orlando.com](http://www.upc-orlando.com).

### LOOK BACK – Mark 11:11-26

Our study of Mark’s gospel brings us to the final week in Jesus’ earthly ministry. Often called Holy (or Passion) Week, the last few days of Jesus’ life before His crucifixion were full of pathos and significance. Last Sunday’s sermon dealt with Jesus’ clearing of the Temple in Jerusalem, which took place on Monday of Holy Week. This event stunned the Jews of Jesus’ day and should both stun and encourage Christians today!

a) Why did Jesus curse the fig tree (vss. 12-14, 20-21)?

---

---

---

b) In what way(s) was the cursing of the fig tree an acted-out parable similar to Jesus’ clearing of the Temple (vss. 15-17)?

---

---

---

c) What character traits did Jesus display as He cleared the Temple in verses 15-17? Do any of them surprise you or contradict most people’s concept of Jesus?

---

---

---

d) The main question about this passage is, *Why* did Jesus clear the Temple? What's the main message Jesus was conveying by this act?

---

---

---

e) What new insights or applications about prayer did you gather in verses 22-25?

---

---

---

**LOOK UP – Mark 11:27-33**

It is now Tuesday of Holy Week. Jesus returns to Jerusalem from His temporary residence in Bethany and spends the day teaching His disciples, debating the religious leaders, and speaking to the crowds that had come to celebrate Passover. As He had overturned the Temple tables on Monday, so on Tuesday we find Jesus overturning many of the commonly-accepted beliefs of the Jews in order to point them in the direction of true salvation.

a) Why do you suppose Jesus went right back to the Temple courts the day after He cast the money changers and merchants out from there (vs. 27)?

---

---

---

b) What do you think the religious leaders were hoping to accomplish by asking Jesus the questions in verse 28?

---

---

---

c) What “things” done by Jesus were the religious leaders referring to in verse 28?

---

---

d) By refusing to directly answer the religious leaders’ questions, what does Jesus accomplish in verses 29-30?

---

---

---

e) What do you learn about the Jewish religious leaders in verses 31-33?

---

---

---

## LOOK IN – Reflect

- a) What did the chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders of the people find so offensive in Jesus? In other words, they had plenty of evidence before them (e.g., miracles, amazing teaching, etc.) to conclude that Jesus was who He claimed to be. Why, then, did they stubbornly refuse to believe?

---

---

---

---

---

- b) In what way(s) does “religion” (as commonly defined by our contemporaries) differ from the gospel according to Jesus?

---

---

---

---

## LOOK OUT – Apply

Mark 11 is a chapter of contrasts. It opens with people shouting “Hosanna!” in praise of Jesus, and closes with the religious leaders plotting to kill Jesus. The reason is that Jesus, by discarding the Temple with its sacrificial system, had sunk a dagger into the very heart of Jewish religion. He called into question everything the Jews put their trust in for salvation.

Suppose Jesus came to our city. Suppose He walked about, observing everyday church life, meeting with religious leaders, and watching Christians in their homes, at work, at school, and at play. Would He curse any fruitless “fig trees” or sacred cows in the modern American church? In other words, what do you suppose Jesus would challenge, question, or even throw out of the church were He to visit us today?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---