

# Following Jesus - The Life of a Disciple - Part 40

## Lesson 40 – Jesus In Jerusalem - The Authority of the King Challenged

### Background:

The gospels provide us with a lot of information about the last week Jesus spent in Jerusalem. An important lesson we can learn is that Jesus' authority was continually challenged. Although He had been welcomed in triumph by many as He arrived in Jerusalem, dark clouds were looming as the religious leaders were determined to deal with what they believed was a challenge to their authority. The lesson of the fig tree is that something that appears fruitful can actually be quite dead and ready for destruction.

**Read:** [Mark 11:11-33](#); [Matthew 22:41-46](#); [Luke 20:45-47](#); [Mark 12:41-44](#)

### Read the Following Quote:

"Jesus' shocking destruction of the fig tree is an acted parable that prophesies what is in store for a people who have proved faithless and whose temple, the very symbol of their faithless religiosity will be destroyed along with the city of Jerusalem (a prophecy fulfilled in AD 70)" [Royce Gordon Gruenler](#)

### Questions:

What do you think the writer means by faithless religiosity? Do we see this in the world today? Where and how?

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### Scripture Passage:

Now answer the questions based on [Mark 11:11-25](#)

### The Fig Tree and the Temple

1. What did Jesus do after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem? What did He do the next morning? (verses 12-14) Why might Jesus curse a fig tree?

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2. What did Jesus see and do when He arrived in the temple? Does His anger surprise you? Think about His words – what was making Him so angry? Is it OK for Jesus to be angry? What was the original purpose of the temple? (verses 15-17)

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3. What did the leading religious leaders think about Jesus? What did they decide to do? Why do you think they were so angry? Would Jesus be angry with religious leaders today? What might make Him angry?
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4. What did they notice next morning when they were returning to Jerusalem? Who remembered Jesus' words? The [city of Jerusalem was destroyed](#) in the year 70 – do you see a possible connection with the destruction of the fig tree?
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5. What does Jesus say about faith? Do you think He means if we believe we can pray to move mountains? What do you think Jesus really wants us to understand about faith and prayer? Can expect God to answer prayers if we pray with an unforgiving heart?
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## The Authority of Jesus is Challenged [Mark 11:27-33](#)

6. The religious leaders question Jesus' authority. What authority did He have and why would they question it? How does Jesus answer them? (verses 27-30) Why does He make a reference to John the Baptist and what do the religious leaders think?
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7. Do you think the religious leaders are genuinely interested in finding out the truth about Jesus? Is it possible that people today might be interested in studying the Bible, meeting with Christians and going to church only to prove that Jesus is wrong? How should we relate to people like this?
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## Whose Son is the Messiah? [Matthew 22:41-16](#)

8. Why do you think that Jesus asked the religious leaders a direct question about the identity of the Messiah? To help understand their answer, read the promise that God gave to King David in [II Samuel 7:12-14](#). Did the religious leaders answer correctly?

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9. Now Jesus reminds the religious leaders of one of the Psalms written by King David when He quotes Psalm 110:1. What do you think Jesus means when He quotes this passage? How could the Messiah be both David's son and his Lord? What was the reaction of the religious leaders?
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## **Beware The Religious Leaders** [Luke 20:45-47](#)

10. Luke's gospel gives us the end of this story. How did Jesus describe the religious leaders to His disciples? Do you think He was right to challenge them in this way? What does Jesus say will happen to these religious leaders? Is it OK to challenge religious leaders today if they are misleading the people?
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## **Beware The Religious Leaders** [Mark 12:41-44](#)

11. Describe what happened as Jesus sat near the collection box. Today we give to the church and other church ministries. Do you think that Jesus means it is ok for anyone to simply give a small contribution? What do you think Jesus is teaching about giving?
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### **Suggested Prayer:**

*Lord have mercy on us for the times when we do not behave as we should. Protect us from the kind of spiritual blindness that prevents us from seeing our own sinfulness. Help us to be faithful followers of Jesus and not be seduced by religious self-righteousness. Please uproot any sinfulness in our lives and guide us in the truth. In Jesus name, Amen.*

### **For Further Reading:**

[What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?](#)

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