

**Bible Study Class**  
**Clayton Presbyterian Church**  
**Lesson 19 Jesus**  
**The Last Week of the Life of Jesus I**

Opening Prayer: Lord, help us to understand that you are always in control. When things go wrong, we need only to look to you for help. Let us see how in this last week of earthly life, Jesus showed us the way to depend completely on You. Amen.

Today's lesson will follow Mark chapters 11 and 12 with a brief passage from Mark 14. Remember that the gospel writers weren't trying to put their gospels in chronological order. We will also turn to Matthew 21 and 22 for brief passages that aren't in the other gospels.

### **Jesus Arrives and Is Feasted at Bethany**

The passage in John lets us know that people gathered in Jerusalem before the Passover so that they could become ceremonially clean for the Passover. As with any large crowd rumors began circulating as to whether Jesus would come. The Sanhedrin had issued orders that if anyone knew where Jesus was, they were to report his whereabouts so that they could arrest him. Naturally the miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead caused Jesus' popularity to rise. Because of this the Sanhedrin even wanted to kill Lazarus. The supper mentioned here was probably on Saturday evening after the Sabbath was over. John mentions that it was six days before the Passover. Notice that Mark and Matthew put the place as the home of Simon the leper, while John seems to indicate that it was at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

**Read** Mark 14:3-9

1. When Jesus visited the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany six days before the Passover, what did Mary do for Him? She anointed Him with nard which was an expensive ointment. The flask seems to have been a long-necked sealed with wax so tightly as to necessitate it being broken to extract the nard. These flasks were costly objects that women liked to possess. The aroma diffused through the whole room.

2. Who criticized Mary's actions? Judas Iscariot according to one gospel, another says disciples. Fourfold says that the murmuring was probably started by Judas but other disciples may have joined in. What was the criticism? The ointment could have been sold and the money given to the poor. How was it answered? You have the poor with you always and she has anointed me in preparation for my burial. There will be plenty of time to do for the poor, but they would only have Jesus in the flesh for another week.

### **Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem**

**Read** Mark 11:1-11

**Bible Study Class**  
**Clayton Presbyterian Church**  
**Lesson 19 Jesus**  
**The Last Week of the Life of Jesus I**

3. How did Jesus enter Jerusalem? Why did He choose to enter the city in such a manner? The name, Bethpage, is said to mean house of figs, but the derivation is disputed. Cook and others think that the region on the eastern slope of Olivet was called Bethpage, and that Bethany was located in it. Many judges and officials used donkeys. David's mule was used during the coronation of Solomon. The horse signified war while the donkey symbolized peace.

**Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.**

4. What was the reaction of the multitudes to Jesus as He entered the city? They cut down branches and spread them. The palm branch is a symbol of triumph and victory. They remembered the prophecy and saw in some sense that Jesus was a king. They realized they were wrong to expect him to antagonize the Romans. If Jerusalem had accepted him, His greatness would have removed all cause for fear. What did they cry out concerning Him? The shout "Hosanna" was customarily used at the feast of the tabernacles and the other festivals. It was a shout of exaltation equivalent to "Salvation".

5. What was the reaction of the Pharisees to Jesus' entry into the city? They wanted Him to rebuke the crowd, this doesn't seem to be a formal committee and perhaps they were genuinely concerned that this would bring vengeance from Rome.

### **The Barren Fig Tree. The Temple Cleansed.**

**Read** Mark 11:12-18

6. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? Breakfast with the Jews came late in the morning, and the days were full of activity. They didn't wait at Bethany for breakfast. There is an implication that the disciples were hungry too. There are two types of figs in Palestine. The early fig with large green leaves and with fruit which ripens in May or June. The second variety is the summer fig that has its main crop in August, but its later fruit often hangs on all winter when the weather is mild, dropping off when the new spring leaves come. As the fruit usually appears before the leaves, the leaves were a promise that fruit might be found, and the fruit is considered edible when the leaves are developed. This tree had showy leaves but no fruit. Symbolically it was like the Jewish leadership who had not followed God's instructions.

7. What did Jesus do when He went into the temple? The temple space being level and roomy tempted the people of Jerusalem to use it as a short-cut from one part of the city to another, but Jesus did not permit them to carry any sack, bag, jug, pail, basket, parcel or such

**Bible Study Class**  
**Clayton Presbyterian Church**  
**Lesson 19 Jesus**  
**The Last Week of the Life of Jesus I**

like thing through the sacred enclosure. Why? They weren't honoring the holiness of the temple.

8. What is meant by the expression "den of thieves?" The caves in certain sections of Palestine have been notoriously infested with robbers, and Jesus, because of the injustice of extortion practiced by the merchants, likens the polluted temple to such a den. The market talk was probably not unlike the grumbling and quarreling of thieves as they divide the booty.

9. What did the chief priests and scribes want to do to Jesus? They wanted to arrest Him. Why did they not do it? They feared the reaction of the people since He was so popular at this time.

### **Finding the Fig Tree Withered**

**Read** Mark 11:19-25

10. Upon seeing the fig tree that He had cursed dried up from its roots, what application does Jesus make to His disciples? He is telling them that whatever they request if it is the will of God, that miracles can occur by their request. Fourfold likens the prejudice and immorality of paganism, and the bigotry and prejudice of Judaism to a mountain that as Christianity begins it must move this mountain.

11. During this period of time, how was Jesus spending His days? He seems to be in Jerusalem Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. He may have spent Wednesday and Thursday in Bethany. Where was He spending the nights? In Bethany which on the Mount of Olives. Fourfold assumes that He moved from different houses so that His locations wouldn't be discovered.

### **A Third Group of Parables Introduced**

**Read** Mark 11:27-33

12. With what question did the chief priest and elders confront Jesus? While Jesus is teaching on Solomon's porch a delegation from the Sanhedrin approach Him to embarrass Him in front of the people who are listening to Him. Since control the affairs of the temple belonged unquestionably and exclusively to the priests and Levites. They knew that Jesus had no authority from any priest or any scribe, they boldly challenged his right to cleanse the temple or to teach in it, feeling sure that to defend himself he would be forced to publicly declare himself as the Messiah. How did He respond? He said that He would ask them a question and if they could answer His question then He would answer theirs. So, He asked them if the baptism of John the Baptist was from heaven or man?

**Bible Study Class**  
**Clayton Presbyterian Church**  
**Lesson 19 Jesus**  
**The Last Week of the Life of Jesus I**

13. Why would the chief priests and elders not answer the question Jesus asked of them? They knew if they answered that it was from heaven, then they should have believed John when he proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah. If they said that he was from man, the people would revolt because they believed John. Since they wouldn't answer His question, what did Jesus do? The question isn't really about John the Baptist, it just pushed these men into a corner, so they refused to answer and Jesus justly said that He wouldn't answer their question.

### **The Parable of the Two Sons**

**Read** Matthew 21:28-32

14. Briefly summarize this parable. What is its main lesson?

The parable literally tells the story of two sons. The first son says that he won't do what his father asks but later does it. The other son says that he will do what his father asks but doesn't do it. Jesus asks which did the will of the Father? They correctly answer the first. This parable is a continuation of the discussion about John the Baptist. The symbols are the religious leaders and the common people. The leaders didn't acknowledge John the Baptist so they have condemned themselves by answering Jesus correctly. In their private conversation had just admitted to each other that the people recognized and obeyed the divine authority of John, while they, the rulers, rejected it

### **The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen**

**Read** Mark 12:1-12

15. Briefly summarize this parable. The landowner plants a vineyard, put a fence around it and constructs a winepress. He rents it to tenants but when he sends for his part of the harvest the tenants beat them or killed them. He decides to send his son whom he thought the tenants would respect. The tenants decide to kill the son so they can get his property. What is its main lesson? The vineyard was often a symbol for Israel, God's chosen people. The leaders knew the symbolism. The servants were the prophets that had been sent. Jesus frequently refers to this withdrawal of the visible presence of God from the world, always bringing out the point that the withdrawal tests faithfulness. God had come down upon Mt. Sinai, given the law and established the Hebrew nation, after which he had withdrawn. That had indeed been a long time ago; and for four hundred years before the appearance of John the Baptist, God had not even sent a messenger to demand fruit.

16. How, by the parable, did the Jews pronounce their own condemnation? They said in Matthew that the owner would kill them, in Mark Jesus says that the vineyard will be given to

**Bible Study Class**  
**Clayton Presbyterian Church**  
**Lesson 19 Jesus**  
**The Last Week of the Life of Jesus I**

others. Either way, they knew that the parable was against them. Imagine their surprise when Jesus knows their plans to kill Him.

### **The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son**

**Read** Matthew 22:1-14

17. Briefly summarize this parable. The king prepares a feast to celebrate his son's wedding. When the first guests give excuses or beat and kill the servants offering the invitations, the king killed the murders and burned the city. It seems strange that those invited refused an invitation to a royal wedding. This illustrates the principle that there is no *logical* reason God's good gifts are refused. Barclay says that when a great social event happened in the Jewish culture of that day, people were invited but without a set time. On the appropriate day, when the host was ready to receive the guests, they sent out messengers to say that all things were ready and it was time to come to the feast. "So, then, the king in this parable had long ago sent out his invitations; but it was not till everything was prepared that the final summons was issued - and insultingly refused." The king rightfully brought judgment upon the offenders. Not only did they reject his invitation, but they also murdered his messengers. This was a prophecy of what would happen to Jerusalem, the city whose religious leaders so strongly rejected Jesus and His gospel. Then he told his servants to go out and invite as many people as you find. What its main lesson. In this parable the first parties invited represent the Jews; the city of murderers is Jerusalem; the persons called from the highways are the Gentiles; the entrance of the king is the coming of the Lord to final judgment.

18. What happened to the guest who came to the marriage feast but was not wearing a wedding garment? Fourfold tells us that the host may have provided the outer wedding garments. The man without the wedding-garment is anyone who will be found in the church without a suitable character. Spurgeon describes him as a party crasher, he was willing to eat the good things set before him, but in his heart, there was no love either for the King or his well-beloved Son." The character of Christ is our wedding-garment, and all must wear it. This statement of Jesus, in this context, touches on the great working together of the choices of man and the choosing of God. Why did they not come to the wedding party? Because they refused the invitation. Why did they not come to the wedding party? Because they were called, but not chosen.

### **The Pharisees and Herodians Ask About Tribute**

**Read** Mark 12:13-17

**Bible Study Class**  
**Clayton Presbyterian Church**  
**Lesson 19 Jesus**  
**The Last Week of the Life of Jesus I**

19. What question did the Pharisees and Herodians pose to Jesus? We don't know much about the Herodians but their name implies that they were followers of Herod Antipas. They were a political group rather than religious. One source contrast them with the Zealots who thought that Israel should be independent, the Herodians supported the Roman rule with political appointed rulers like Herod. They asked if it was against the law to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor. Why did they ask such a question? They wanted Jesus to publicly say something against Rome.

20. How did Jesus respond to the question the Pharisees and Herodians had asked Him? Jesus asked for a coin. The Jews were required to pay annually a large sum of money to the Roman government. About twenty years before this Judas of Galilee had stirred up the people to resist this tribute, and the mass of the Jews was bitterly opposed to it. The people didn't like to pay it of course. If Jesus said the taxes shouldn't be paid then the Herodians would have a public statement to hold against Him. We like to phrase our problems or situations into "black and white" "yes or no" but often God does something as we say today "outside the box." Religious dues and tributes had been paid in shekels or old Jewish coin, but the tribute to Rome was paid in Roman coin of which the denarius was a sample. Fourfold makes the point that God at this point is no longer the civil ruler so paying taxes to civil authority and continuing to obey God is compatible. Paul continued to emphasize this point in:

**Romans 13:1** Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

21. What reaction did the Pharisees and Herodians have to the answer Jesus gave them? They left amazed at His answer that was so far above answers they had expected.

### **The Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection**

**Read** Mark 12:18-27

22. Did the Sadducees believe in the resurrection? No. They didn't believe in angels or spirits either. They believed that when you died, that was it. This parable or story about the seven brothers referred back to a law to help preserve a man's name if he died without a son. His brother was to marry his wife and the first boy would carry on the name of the dead brother. The Sadducees evidently posed this ridiculous example to the Pharisees and others to show that resurrection would include marriage. You know that you have been to many funerals where in offering comfort the speaker has said that the deceased is now united with their

**Bible Study Class**  
**Clayton Presbyterian Church**  
**Lesson 19 Jesus**  
**The Last Week of the Life of Jesus I**

spouse. What was their question to Jesus? Their question was whose wife would the woman be in eternity.

23. What was Jesus' answer to the Sadducees? Jesus goes back to Moses, in whom the Sadducees believed. He cited what Moses heard from the burning bush. God said that He was the God of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac, all of whom had been dead a long time. Jesus also explained that God isn't the God of the dead, but of the living. Jesus says that in eternal life there is no marriage. How did the multitudes react to Jesus' answer? They were astonished but praised Him by saying "well said Teacher."

### **A Lawyer Asks About the Great Commandment**

**Read** Mark 12: 28-34

24. What question did a lawyer ask of Jesus seeing that He had silenced the Sadducees? He asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment. While we think of the Ten Commandments. Jewish writers tell us that there was a dispute among the rabbis as to which was the greatest commandment. Some would pick one commandment and another would pick another one. But as they reckoned the commandments of Moses as numbering over six hundred, there was plenty of room for argument. They hoped to involve Jesus in this argument.

25. What answer did Jesus give the lawyer? The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: And a Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This command is first because it is the foundation of the entire law of God. It is greatest, because, in a sense, it includes all the other laws and all sins against God are forbidden by it. All sins against man are likewise, in a sense, prohibited by it; for sin against man is sin against God's image, and against the objects of God's love. Those who truly love God cannot consistently sin against man. Why was His answer correct? His answer comes from Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The rest of the commandments rest on these.

26. How did the questioner respond to the answer Jesus gave him? The scribe praised Jesus and said that He had answered well. In turn, what did Jesus now say of him? Jesus told him that he was not far from the kingdom.

### **Jesus' Question Which None Could Answer**

**Read** Mark 12:35-37

27. What question did Jesus ask the Pharisees which silenced them? He asked them whose son was the Christ? They said David and then He quoted them

**Bible Study Class**  
**Clayton Presbyterian Church**  
**Lesson 19 Jesus**  
**The Last Week of the Life of Jesus I**

Psalm 110: 1 The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

This Psalm speaks of the Messiah as the Lord of David, and other Scriptures call him David's son. So also, the Scriptures describe Christ as conquering yet suffering, as divine yet human, as dying yet living, as judged yet judging, etc. The Jewish rulers seem able to grasp only one side of the character of Christ as revealed either in his life or in the Scriptures.

28. What was the attitude of the "common people" toward Jesus? They heard Him gladly. The questions of the rulers had not lessened His popularity with the common people.

Closing prayer: Lord, help us to apply Your lesson to our lives more fully. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mark 14:3-9	Mark 12: 1-12	Matthew 21:28-32
Mark 11:1-11	Mark 12:13-17	Matthew 22:1-14
Mark 11:12-18	Mark 12:18-27	
Mark 11:19-25	Mark 12: 28-34	
Mark 11:27-33	Mark 12:35-37	