



Date: September 20, 2020

Scripture: Mark 11:11-25

The following texts relate to Mark 11:11-25. See if you can find out how. What are the connections?

Hosea 9:10 (NLT)

The Lord says, "O Israel, when I first found you, it was like finding fresh grapes in the desert. When I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the first ripe figs of the season. But then they deserted me for Baal-peor, giving themselves to that shameful idol. Soon they became vile, as vile as the god they worshiped.

Micah 7:1 (NLT)

How miserable I am! I feel like the fruit picker after the harvest who can find nothing to eat. Not a cluster of grapes or a single early fig can be found to satisfy my hunger.

Jeremiah 7:20 (ESV)

Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be quenched."

Jeremiah 8:13 (NLT)

I will surely consume them. There will be no more harvests of figs and grapes. Their fruit trees will all die. Whatever I gave them will soon be gone. I, the Lord, have spoken!

Is Jesus truly surprised that the Tree has no fruit? Explain. ⁱ

What is a prophetic "Sign-act" (think charades and see this EXCELLENT article <https://bibleproject.com/blog/sign-acts-wonderful-world-prophetic-communication/>) ?

How is the Cursing of a Fig Tree a Sign act?ⁱⁱ



The Temple – see the following endnote. ⁱⁱⁱ

Do you think that verse 24 teaches that we can have anything we want when we ask believing that God will give it to us? Why or Why not?^{iv}

Look more closely at the Mountain promise in verse 23. Does that refer to any and all mountains or to a specific Mountain? Which Mountain was Jesus referring too? Why is that significant (think prophecy). ^v

The Fruit that God desires is Faith (vv 22). What are the evidences of Faith in this passage? ^{vi}

How does prayer encourage, stimulate, and grow one's faith?

Why does it require faith in order to forgive?



ⁱ **Out of Season?**

Mark alone mentions that the tree did not bear anything more than leaves “*because it was not the season for figs,*” and it makes Jesus’ action seem even more outlandish. Why curse a fig tree for not bearing figs out of season? Jesus surely knows it is not fig season. This detail is a clue for the reader to look beyond the surface meaning and to see its symbolic meaning. ...The barren fig tree represents the barrenness of temple Judaism that is unprepared to accept Jesus’ messianic reign.

David E. Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 440.

should be translated,

“and the significant thing about this is that it was not even the season for figs.”

William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 401.

the best interpretation is that

Jesus in his omniscience saw that the tree would never produce fruit, so he used the occasion to teach the disciples.

Rodney L. Cooper, *Mark*, vol. 2, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 185–186.

ii

- Like tree, like temple;
- like temple, like nation;

the parallel is exact.

R. Alan Cole, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 2, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 256.

Time can run out for fruitless trees and prayerless temples.

David E. Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 440.

iii **The Temple (11:15–17)**

The temple was the central institution of Israel's religious, political, and economic life. Economically, it dominated more than just the skyline of Jerusalem. It also served as the central bank, the capital building, and Wall Street. For most people living in the city, the temple was their means of employment. Politically, the temple was the power base and source of wealth for the priestly hierarchy, who ruled Judea under the Roman governor. Religiously, the temple marked the separation between the holy and secular, and it became the symbol of God's abiding favor and presence among the people. The Holy of Holies was regarded as a radioactive core of holiness that could fend off and purify the evil that surrounded Israel. As Waetjen puts it well, the temple was "the one place where heaven and earth are united, that absolute point of reference which, like the North Star, serves as a compass and guarantees a divine security in the passage through life."¹

¹ David E. Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 445.

To attack something so important, so holy, so massive
took enormous courage and sealed Jesus' fate.

David E. Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 445.

Originally, God was worshiped in the wilderness tabernacle, described in [Exodus 25–31](#). This tabernacle was portable. When the Lord gave David rest from his enemies, David wanted to replace the tabernacle with a permanent structure, the temple. David's son and successor, Solomon, was given the task of building the temple. Over time, there were three different temples on this same site in Jerusalem. The last of these was called Herod's temple. This was the temple that existed in Jesus' day. In fact, Herod's temple was still under construction during the time of Jesus' death and resurrection.

At the time of Jesus, the temple was divided into several sections. The first section, the outer ring, was called the court of the Gentiles. Gentiles could come and worship God here, but they could not go further. This is where the merchants whom Jesus drove out were buying and selling. They were blocking the area, and the Gentiles had no place to worship. The next court was the court of women. Then came the court of the Israelites and finally the court of the priests. The Jews thought that holiness proceeded from outside to inside the temple. The more holy you were, the deeper inside the temple you were allowed.

The inner court of the temple was further divided into two rooms: the holy place and the Holy of Holies. A curtain separated the two. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to offer a blood sacrifice for the people. When Jesus died, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place split in two. This symbolized what Jesus spoke of in this chapter: His house would be a place of prayer and mercy for all nations, for all people.

Merchants found easy and eager buyers for sacrificial animals. As Barclay notes, "A sacrificial victim had to be without blemish. Doves could be bought cheaply enough outside, but the temple inspectors would be sure to find something wrong with them, and worshipers were advised to buy them at the temple stalls." The price for these animals when bought inside the temple was extravagant.

A temple tax was also collected at Passover. This tax equaled approximately two days wages and had to be paid at the temple. But it could not be paid in ordinary coin; it had to be paid in temple shekels. The priests charged a fee for exchanging the coins into shekels. Further, if the person



needed change, back, he was charged extra for this service. It was a heavy expense for a pilgrim coming to the temple to worship God! The temple was a sign of kingship. In chapter 11 of Mark, we see the king entering his kingdom. He had the right to clear the temple because it was his temple. He was the king.

However, the primary vocation of the temple and its priests was holiness. God had called his people to be “set apart,” to be holy because he was holy. The temple was to be the place where God’s people came to be cleansed, to offer thanksgiving, to be God’s people. The temple was also a sign of God’s continuing presence with his people. In the New Testament, Paul developed the theme of God’s presence by calling Christians “the temple of the living God.” The Gospel of John calls Jesus Christ the temple, as the embodiment of God, the word made flesh ([John 1:14](#)). In fact, the word *tabernacle* means “dwelling.” The Gospel of John stated that the word became flesh and “tabernacled” among us (see [John 1:14](#)). It is significant that the temple was where people received atonement for their sins and were cleansed.¹

¹ Rodney L. Cooper, *Mark*, vol. 2, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 193–194.

^{iv} It must be in accordance with God’s will. If it is God’s will, God will CERTAINLY accomplish it. If it is not, why should He? God only guarantees to do that which is in His perfect will. But when we are in His will, he guarantees to supply all our needs to accomplish what He wants to happen.

WILL OF GOD

[Ps 143:10](#) -

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God;
may your good Spirit lead me on **level ground.**

God's will = ?

God’s “will” (Gr. thelema) includes His righteous demands (7:21; 12:50; cf. [Ps. 40:8](#)) as well as His determination to cause certain events in history (18:14; 26:42; cf. [Acts 21:14](#)).

This petition focuses on God’s will. People need to do it.

Tom Constable. (2003; 2003). Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible ([Mt 6:9](#)). Galaxie Software.

- see - **Will of God** in Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Nelson's quick reference topical Bible index*. Nelson's Quick reference (650). Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers. [logosres:tntopicdx;hw=Will_of_God](#)



Summary of God's Wills

1.) **Revealed Will** -- God's declared will concerning what we should or should not do revealed to us is in the Bible...describes God's attitude and defines what is pleasing to Him

Also known as "Will of Precept, Will of Command, Moral Will"

2.) **Secret Will** -- the exact details behind his eternal plan for the ages. "Includes his hidden decrees by which he governs the universe...his decree concerning what will certainly occur" (Grudem)

3.) **Sovereign Will**-- because He is sovereign, He must at least permit or allow whatever happens to happen.

a. **Perfect Will** -- what God wants

b. **Permissive Will** -- What He allows

Important NT term indicating God's choice and determination, emanating from desire. Adapted and altered from Got questions Article

Paul used a Greek word in [Ephesians 1:5](#), [9](#), and [11](#) that conveys the idea of desire, even heart's desire. The word is usually translated as "will"—"the will of God." But the English word "will" sublimates the primary meaning. The Greek word (thelema) is primarily an emotional word and only secondarily is it volitional. **"God's will" is not so much "God's intention" as it is "God's heart's desire."**

God does have an intention, a purpose, a plan. It is called prothesis in Greek (see [Eph 1:11](#)), and it literally means "a laying out beforehand" (like a blueprint). This plan was created by God's counsel (called boule in Greek, [Eph 1:11](#)). However, behind the plan and the counsel was **not just a mastermind but a heart**—a heart of love and of good pleasure. Therefore, Paul talked about "the good pleasure of God's heart" ([Eph 1:5](#)). Paul also said, "He made known to us the mystery of his heart's desire, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him" (v 9). Indeed, God operated all things according to the counsel of his heart's desire or will (v 11).

The impetus of God's eternal purpose came from a heart's desire, and that heart's desire was to have many sons and daughters made like his only Son (see [Rom 8:26–28](#)). In love, he predestined many people to participate in this—not by their own merits but by virtue of being in the Son ([Eph 1:4–5](#)).

Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). Tyndale Bible dictionary. Tyndale reference library (1302). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

v **THIS - Specific - Mountain (Mt. Zion)**

The Dead Sea is visible from the Mount of Olives and it is appropriate to take the reference to “this mountain” quite literally. An allusion may be intended to [Zech. 14:4](#). In the eschatological day described there the Mount of Olives is to be split in two, and when the Lord assumes his kingship “the whole land shall be turned into a plain” ([Zech. 14:10](#)). The prayer in question is then specifically a Passover prayer for God to establish his reign.

William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 410.

We have generalized Jesus’ statement, “If anyone says to this mountain ...” into a proverb about a difficult task, “faith is able to move mountains” (see [Matt. 17:20](#); [1 Cor. 13:2](#)). Jesus does not say “mountains” but specifies “this mountain.” In the Markan context he is most likely referring to the temple mount, Mount Zion. Contrary to expectations, the mountain of the Lord’s house would not be exalted ([Isa. 2:2](#); [Mic. 4:1](#)) but would be cast into the sea, where the demons that infested the pigs drowned ([5:13](#)) and those who caused little ones to stumble would be thrown ([9:42](#)). In spite of the temple’s immense power and holiness, it would be destroyed. In spite of the widespread belief that God’s earthly address was the Holy of Holies, the temple, Jerusalem, the Holy Land, the temple would no longer be the focal point of God’s presence among the people. God can no more be confined to one spot than Jesus could be contained in a tomb. God’s people can function without a holy space or cultic functionaries.¹

¹ David E. Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 441.

vi **“Fruit” in Mark 11 = **Faith****

• **Faith manifested in...**

- Prayer
- Forgiveness
- Submission to God’s will.