

## The Gospel According to Mark

### Lesson 9

*Mark 11:1 – Mark 13:37*

#### **The prophecy of the colt in Jerusalem**

**Mark 11:** <sup>1</sup>And as they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, <sup>2</sup>and said to them, "*Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here.*" <sup>3</sup>"And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here." <sup>4</sup>And they went away and found a colt tied at the door outside in the street; and they untied it. <sup>5</sup>And some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" <sup>6</sup>And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told *them*, and they gave them permission.

With Bartimaeus and the caravan of believers, Jesus approached Bethphage (house of unripe young figs.) It was just a short distance from Jericho and stood at the foot of the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem is out of sight on the western side of the mountain. Bethany is just a short distance further south of Bethphage, but still at the foot of the mountain.

The colt was tied up in Jerusalem and ready for Jesus' disciples to ask permission for its use. Jesus waited for their return in Bethphage. We now know that it is Sunday morning, the day of the Lord's triumphal entry. We may also assume with great certainty that the Lord healed Bartimaeus on this same day.

#### **The triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Sunday**

**Mark 11:** <sup>7</sup>And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it; and He sat upon it. <sup>8</sup>And many spread their garments in the road, and others *spread* leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. <sup>9</sup>And those who went before, and those who followed after, were crying out, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; <sup>10</sup> Blessed *is* the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!" <sup>11</sup>And He entered Jerusalem *and came* into the temple; and after looking all around, He departed for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.

Late in the afternoon the disciples returned with the colt which, although it had never been ridden, gently carried the Lord into the city. Jesus had orchestrated the preparation of the colt for His use. No doubt the crowds that gathered expected Jesus to set up His earthly kingdom that day. Without saying a word, Jesus rode it into the city which proclaimed His Messiahship as the crowds cleared the path by spreading broken branches and garments along the way. The parade ended at the door of the old temple which was built after the return from exile in Babylon with money from the Persian treasury and later adorned with gold, repaired and

decorated by Herod. He had entered the temple with no resistance from its religious caretakers. Had He desired to take it for Himself that day, the crowd would have supported Him, but that was not His intent. He did not come to set up His earthly kingdom on His first visit to earth; rather, He came to offer His life for the salvation of all mankind. A look was all He needed in the temple that Sunday evening. Then He needed to return to a place to rest His head for the night.

### **The curse of the fig tree on Monday**

**Mark 11:** <sup>12</sup>And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He became hungry. <sup>13</sup>And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. <sup>14</sup>And He answered and said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

Bethany was a friendly place for the Lord and He returned to it every night that week except Thursday. Mark 14:3 tells us that He stayed in the home of Simon the leper each night that week. Without doubt, Simon had been healed by Jesus sometime in the past three and a half years and enthusiastically offered his home with a grateful heart.

Hungry, Jesus sought food from the fig tree He saw in the distance. Fig trees yield their first crop in June and July and continue to produce through August. This tree had put its leaves on early, showing all the signs of a fruited tree from a distance. It showed promise but it lacked performance. It bore no fruit. The Lord cursed the tree and it would die before it could ever bear fruit.

### **Clearing the temple on Monday**

**Mark 11:** <sup>15</sup>And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves; <sup>16</sup>and He would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple. <sup>17</sup>And He *began* to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN." <sup>18</sup>And the chief priests and the scribes heard *this*, and *began* seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching. <sup>19</sup>And whenever evening came, they would go out of the city.

On Monday Jesus and the apostles made their way to the temple. Jesus was infuriated with the practices of the money changers in the temple and had run them out of the temple at the beginning of His ministry, so it only seems logical that He would do the same at the end of His ministry. The trading of Caesar's coins for temple shekels did not bother Him, nor did the purchasing of doves for sacrificial offerings. It was common for the people who were coming from a long distance to sell their offerings in their home towns and purchase an offering at the temple with the money they had collected from the sale. With Jesus, the heart of the gift was more important than the gift. However, Jesus was furious with the salesmen at the tables in the court because they were not selling the doves at a fair price. They were

taking advantage of the people so Jesus threw them out of the temple. The money changers were just as bad. In the market place the Roman coinage as well as the temple coinage could be used at equal rates; a Roman dollar was just as valuable as temple dollar. However, the temple would not accept a Roman dollar as an offering because it was stamped with the image of Caesar; it was necessary to convert that coin to a temple shekel before contributing it to the offering. In one of the courts of the temple, money changers exchanged the Roman coins for shekels, but not at equal value. Money changers were needed for this purpose, but they could not make a living at this business by exchanging the coins at equal value. Jesus understood the need for the money changers to make a profit. They, too, had families that needed food and clothing. Jesus' fury came upon them when He discovered they were exchanging the coins at an exorbitant rate. The money changers and the dove salesmen were thieves in God's eyes. On that day Jesus stopped all transport of goods through the temple. It was to be a day of teaching. His triumphal entry on Sunday had proved His power and authority in the city and among the people. His clearing of the temple had proved His messianic power to the scribes and Pharisees. They feared Him and fled the property because of the crowd that filled the complex. That day Jesus controlled the entire temple agenda. At the end of the day, He and His followers went back to Bethany for the night.

### **The lesson of the fig tree on Tuesday**

**Mark 11:** <sup>20</sup>And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots *up*. <sup>21</sup>And being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered." <sup>22</sup>And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup>"Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be *granted* him. <sup>24</sup>"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be *granted* you. <sup>25</sup>"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. <sup>26</sup>~~"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions."~~

The lesson of the cursed fig tree is to "have faith in God." The tree had put on leaves signaling the presence of fruit, but it was barren when Jesus inspected it. He cursed it and it died. What else could the tree do? The day before, the creator had declared its doom. Peter's surprise and amazement that the tree had withered indicated Peter's lack of faith in the words of Jesus. "Have faith in God," Jesus said. Believing what He says to be the absolute truth is the message He wants Peter and the other followers to engrave on their hearts and minds. Jesus had given them the authority to carry on His work months before when He appointed them as apostles. The incident with the demon had shaken their faith in the authority they had been granted. That time they had tried to cast out the demon without praying first. In this scene, Jesus grants them the same authority that He possesses if they are clean and pure in their hearts and minds when they make their prayerful petition. However, if they have not forgiven others, then the Lord will not grant their request.

## The question of authority - Spoken in the temple on Tuesday

**Mark 11:** <sup>27</sup>And they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, and scribes, and elders came to Him, <sup>28</sup>and *began* saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?" <sup>29</sup>And Jesus said to them, "*I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.*" <sup>30</sup>*"Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me."* <sup>31</sup>And they *began* reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?'" <sup>32</sup>"But shall we say, 'From men?'"-- they were afraid of the multitude, for all considered John to have been a prophet indeed. <sup>33</sup>And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "*Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.*"

A formal cohort from the Sanhedrin confronted Jesus when He arrived at the temple on Tuesday. They wanted to know why Jesus thought He had the authority to clear the temple and teach His radical theology. Jesus confounded them with His question in front of the multitude of people listening to Him in the temple.

The death of John the Baptist had increased his popularity among the people. John had baptized Jesus so there was a direct link between the two. John had openly stated he was the forerunner, sent to announce the coming of Jesus. Most of those questioning Jesus at this moment were probably at the Jordan River when He was baptized. To deny that John was a prophet would bring the wrath of the multitude upon them. John was dead. They did not need to do anything to bring wrath because of a dead man, but if they denounced John, they would be denouncing Jesus. If they answered that John received his authority from God, then it would be logical that Jesus, whose ministry was greater than John's, would receive His authority from God too.

## The parable – They killed the heir – Spoken in the temple on Tuesday

**Mark 12:** <sup>1</sup>And He began to speak to them in parables: "*A man PLANTED A VINEYARD, AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT, AND DUG A VAT UNDER THE WINE PRESS, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey.*" <sup>2</sup>*"And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers.*" <sup>3</sup>*"And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed.*" <sup>4</sup>*"And again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully.*" <sup>5</sup>*"And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some, and killing others.*" <sup>6</sup>*"He had one more to send, a beloved son; he sent him last of all to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'*" <sup>7</sup>*"But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!'"* <sup>8</sup>*"And they took him, and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.*" <sup>9</sup>*"What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others.*" <sup>10</sup>*"Have you not even read this Scripture: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE*

CHIEF CORNER stone; <sup>11</sup> THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?"

Ignoring the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus told the parable of the wicked vine keepers. Today, it is easy to understand that this parable is the story of Israel's relationship to God. The Israelites were given the oracles of God and they misused them. Prophet after prophet was sent to guide them back into the truth but they rejected each one. Finally, God sent His only Son to them and they killed Him. When Jesus told this parable, neither His followers nor the scribes and Pharisees fully understood the immediate truth and consequences of His words. Jesus quoted from the words of Psalm 118:22-23 at the end of the parable. Before the end of the week Jesus will be displayed as the chief cornerstone, rejected by the builders.

### **Render unto Caesar – Spoken in the temple on Tuesday**

**Mark 12:** <sup>12</sup> And they were seeking to seize Him; and yet they feared the multitude; for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him, and went away. <sup>13</sup> And they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him, in order to trap Him in a statement. <sup>14</sup> And they came and said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? <sup>15</sup> "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius to look at." <sup>16</sup> And they brought one. And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were amazed at Him.

Thinking that they had devised a question that would surely trap Jesus in a political/theological quandary, the Pharisees and Herodians asked if it was lawful to pay a poll tax to Caesar. We must not be deceived by this question; there was no such thing as separation of religion and state in those days. Remember, the temple would not accept coins with the image of Caesar on them, but the government would accept any and all money for payment of taxes. A poll tax was charged each time the family head went to the poll. We must not misunderstand the purpose of the poll either. The Roman government was not a democracy. A person did not go to the poll to vote; he went to the poll to register his family and pay the tax. A poll tax was in essence a per-person head tax each time the family head went to the poll. If the family consisted of ten people plus four slaves, a tax would be paid on fourteen people. Different taxes were due based on the age or status of each person. The tax for a newborn son was not as much as the tax of a strapping, strong, twenty-five year old slave. Old slaves were worth less than old family members. When Caesar demanded a registry or count of the number of people in his domain, a tax was collected for each person registered. The religious leaders never expected the answer Jesus gave; even they were amazed.

## Who's wife will she be in heaven – Spoken in the temple on Tuesday

**Mark 12:** <sup>18</sup>And some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Him, and *began* questioning Him, saying, <sup>19</sup>"Teacher, Moses wrote for us that IF A MAN'S BROTHER DIES, and leaves behind a wife, AND LEAVES NO CHILD, HIS BROTHER SHOULD TAKE THE WIFE, AND RAISE UP OFFSPRING TO HIS BROTHER. <sup>20</sup>"There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died, leaving no offspring. <sup>21</sup>"And the second one took her, and died, leaving behind no offspring; and the third likewise; <sup>22</sup>and so all seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. <sup>23</sup>"In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife." <sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, "*Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures, or the power of God?*" <sup>25</sup>"For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup>"But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *passage about the burning bush*, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, and the God of Jacob'? <sup>27</sup>"He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken."

The Pharisees were the religious powerhouses in the Sanhedrin. The Herodians were the political powerhouses in the government. Together they had taken their best shot at stumping Jesus that day. It was only fair for the Sadducees to have a chance to show their theological superiority over the Pharisees at the expense of Jesus. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, but the Pharisees did. The Sadducees were even further to the left of truth than the Pharisees were. They presented to Jesus an absurd hypothetical theological situation. Jesus was not shaken by their question at all. He did not stumble around and mumble, trying not to offend them; rather, He struck at the heart of their ignorance, exposing their stupidity to the entire multitude present including the rest of the Sanhedrin and the Herodians.

For theological understanding, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection. They also believed that marital functions would take place after the resurrection, just as Islam teaches today. The Sadducees did not believe in the possibility of marital relations in an afterlife and used it as their main objection to the idea of a resurrection. The Sadducees held to oral laws whereas the Pharisees held to traditions. Both had moved far away from the oracles of God and were ignorant of scriptural truths.

## What is the foremost commandment – Spoken in the temple on Tuesday

**Mark 12:** <sup>28</sup>And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, "*The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; <sup>30</sup>AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'*" <sup>31</sup>"The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Breaking from the pack of mentality of the Sanhedrin, one of the scribes was taken aback by the answers of Jesus. Alone, he asked of the Lord a question concerning

the foremost commandment. The Lord's answer came not from one passage of the law, but two, Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. The scribe had asked for the foremost commandment, but he was greatly impressed by the two commandments Jesus included in His short simple answer.

### **Not far from the kingdom of god – Spoken in the temple on Tuesday**

**Mark 12:** <sup>32</sup>And the scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher, You have truly stated that HE IS ONE; AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; <sup>33</sup>AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup>And when Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "**You are not far from the kingdom of God.**" And after that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

The scribe placed himself in jeopardy with all the other members of the Sanhedrin at this point when he asked a straight forward question and received a straight forward answer. His question was not loaded or deceptive like those of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In fact, his question revealed that he was seeking truth, and he found it in the Lord's answer. If the scribe would only believe that Jesus was the Christ, he would obtain the kingdom of God.

There were no more questions that day so the Lord continued with a topic that would bring the scribe to the kingdom of God.

### **No more questions, so Jesus will begin teaching – Spoken in the temple on Tuesday**

**Mark 12:** <sup>35</sup>And Jesus answering *began* to say, as He taught in the temple, "**How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?** <sup>36</sup>"David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT THINE ENEMIES BENEATH THY FEET.'" <sup>37</sup> "David himself calls Him 'Lord'; and so in what sense is He his son?" And the great crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

Not one member of the Sanhedrin dared to question the Lord now. Jesus was concerned about one scribe who needed to accept Him as the Christ or Messiah. With all the Sanhedrin a captured audience in the presence of the multitude, Jesus presented a point of difficulty in their logic. It is not a spiritual mystery or conundrum; rather, it is the key to His mission on earth. All the scribes taught that the Christ would be a descendant or son of David. They had all heard the multitude declaring Jesus as the Christ during His triumphal ride into the city on Sunday. But the Sanhedrin had missed the important fact that David, the distant father of the Christ, also called Him his Lord. The Christ was to be both fully God and fully man. No one responded to the Lord's question, but the multitude enjoyed every word He spoke. The Sanhedrin, who had begun their vicious attack early in the morning, now found their plans for the day a monumental failure.



## **Beware of the scribes – Spoken in the temple on Tuesday**

**Mark 12:** <sup>38</sup>And in His teaching He was saying: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and *like* respectful greetings in the market places, <sup>39</sup>and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets, <sup>40</sup>who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."

Turning to the crowd with the Sanhedrin in hearing range, Jesus presented a scathing, but true picture of the religious hypocrites. The scribes were the religious teachers of the day and most of them were Pharisees. Jesus did not mince words as He described their dress and demeanor. Everyone knew when a scribe was in the crowd; no one else dressed like a scribe. They had to sit in certain seats at the synagogue and the head table at banquets so they could be seen. They would encourage a widow to give her house to the temple and then take it for their own use. What a tragedy! They prayed long prayers so they could display their intelligence and religiosity although God cared nothing for the prayer and ignored them. The Sanhedrin was in jeopardy of hell's burning fire and Jesus was there to warn them.

## **The poor widow – Spoken in the temple on Tuesday**

**Mark 12:** <sup>41</sup>And He sat down opposite the treasury, and *began* observing how the multitudes were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. <sup>42</sup>And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. <sup>43</sup>And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; <sup>44</sup>for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."

A better time could not have been planned for this widow to enter the temple to give her offering. She was a pauper and she was pitiful. She was also a perfect contrast to the pious people of the Sanhedrin. The two small copper coins were all the money she had in the world. It is a travesty when a religious person presents himself to the Lord with a widow's mite when his tithe should be in the thousands of dollars instead of a few thousand pennies.

## **Not one stone will be left upon another – Spoken leaving the temple on Tuesday**

**Mark 13:** <sup>1</sup>And as He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" <sup>2</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down."

The stones mentioned in this passage were also mentioned in Josephus' Antiquity, book 15, chapter 11, section 3. Josephus, a contemporary of Jesus, states, "Now the temple was built of stones that were white and strong, and each of their length was twenty-five cubits, their height was eight, and their breadth about twelve... ." Forty years after Jesus told His disciples that not one stone would be left upon another, Titus' army moved into Jerusalem on Sunday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 70 AD and



unknowingly fulfilled Jesus' prophecy by completely tearing the temple apart. After his rampage, the foundation of the temple was all that remained in place.

### **What will be the signs? – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

**Mark 13:** <sup>3</sup>And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, <sup>4</sup>"Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

The four apostles slipped off to a corner with Jesus in a secluded conversation, but the others were most likely straining to hear the Lord's response. The questions were not well stated but were consistent with the apostles' difficulty in understanding the true meaning of the Lord's parables and stories. But Jesus understood their intent and answered both questions. The Lord's discourse is rather lengthy and Mark records it all without interjection from the apostles.

### **Merely the beginning – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

**Mark 13:** <sup>5</sup>And Jesus began to say to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. <sup>6</sup>"Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He!*' and will mislead many. <sup>7</sup>"And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; *those things must take place; but that is not yet the end.* <sup>8</sup>"For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will *also* be famines. These things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

We know that the temple was destroyed in 70 AD, but that was forty years after this discourse with the apostles. Four decades filled with rumors and troubles for the Jews would have to be endured before the temple would fall. Within the year the Jews in Alexandria would be tormented and tortured. Later, fifty thousand Jews would be slaughtered at Jamnia. Three Roman emperors would threaten to destroy the temple in Jerusalem, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. The Jews would endure an earthquake in Crete in 46 AD, Rome in 51 AD, Phrygia in 60 AD and Campania in 63 AD. They would almost starve to death during the four famine years in Claudius' reign from 41-54 AD. Other natural disasters killed hundred of Jews like the cyclone of 65 AD. All of these occurrences were merely birth pangs. The birth of destruction came when the Emperor Titus finally followed through on his threat.

### **Persecution for you – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

**Mark 13:** <sup>9</sup>"But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to *the* courts, and you will be flogged in *the* synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

Over the next forty years, those who heard the Lord speak these words that day would be persecuted and die before the fall of the temple. Only John, the youngest apostle, Jude the brother of James and Simon would live to see the destruction of the temple.

**James the Great** or James the son of Zebedee, the elder brother of John and a relative of our Lord, died next. His mother was Salome, the cousin of Mary. James was beheaded by Herod Agrippa, in 44 AD.

**Philip** was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified in A.D. 54.

**Matthew** was slain in the city of Nadabah in 60 AD.

**James the Less**, the brother of our Lord by a former wife of Joseph, and the author of the book of James, was beaten and stoned at the age of ninety-four by the Jews. His brains dashed were out with a wash-tub bat.

**Matthias** was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.

**Andrew**, the brother of Peter, was crucified on a cross, at Edessa. The two ends of the cross were fixed transversely in the ground.

**Peter** was crucified, with his head down and his feet up.

**Paul** was beheaded at the command of Nero.

**Jude** or Thaddeus, the brother of James, was crucified at Edessa, A.D. 72.

**Bartholomew** was cruelly beaten and then crucified.

**Thomas**, or Didymus, was martyred by being thrust through with a spear.

**Simon**, the zealot, was crucified in A.D. 74.

**Stephen** was the first recorded martyr after Calvary. He was stoned to death while Saul of Tarsus cared for the robes of the stoners in 34 AD.

**Luke** was hanged on an olive tree by the idolatrous priests of Greece.

**Mark** was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria.

### **The gospel must be preached – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

<sup>10</sup>"And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

Once Jesus spoke these words, within six months the gospel would be spread to every nation of the world where Jews lived. The Jewish sojourners who made their way to Jerusalem that year for Pentecost were from all the known nations of the world. Acts 2:9-12 reports that Jews in Jerusalem were: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, Cappadocians, Pontians, Asians, Phrygians, Pamphylans, Egyptians, Libyans around Cyrene, Romans, Cretans and Arabs. They heard the gospel on the day of Pentecost, joined the church, and returned home to share the gospel and begin churches.

By the time that Paul writes to the Colossians he states that the entire world has heard the gospel and is bearing fruit.

**Col. 1:3-6** We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup>since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the

love which you have for all the saints; <sup>5</sup>because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup>which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth;

**Col. 1:21-23** And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, <sup>22</sup>yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-- <sup>23</sup>if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

### **The leading of the Holy Spirit – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

<sup>11</sup>"And when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup>"And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. <sup>13</sup>"And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

Be aware that Jesus is not speaking about preaching or teaching in this passage. He is speaking about answering questions before a council of persecutors. They are to face their accusers fearlessly, answering to the best of their knowledge, led by the Holy Spirit. In those days, the division among families will finally take place as predicted by Jesus.

### **The abomination of desolation – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

<sup>14</sup>"But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (~~let the reader understand~~), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>15</sup>"And let him who is on the housetop not go down, or enter in, to get anything out of his house; <sup>16</sup>and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. <sup>17</sup>"But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! <sup>18</sup>"But pray that it may not happen in the winter. <sup>19</sup>"For those days will be a *time of* tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall. <sup>20</sup>"And unless the Lord had shortened *those* days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days.

The Hebrew and Greek word that we translate as "abomination" is elsewhere translated as "stink." Likewise, the word we translate as "desolation" is elsewhere translated as "appalls." Today, the correct translation of this passage could be "But when you see the stink that appalls standing where it should not be ... flee." Jesus is

speaking of the tribulation time prophesied through Daniel. Forty years later Jesus would speak through John in the Revelation to shed more light on this tragic time.

### **False Christs will lead astray – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

<sup>21</sup>"And then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, *He is* there'; do not believe *him*; <sup>22</sup>for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray. <sup>23</sup>"But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.

The saints of God should not be gullible. Christ forewarned the apostles and all of Christianity that many would come claiming falsely to be "The Christ," but we are not to believe them. When Christ comes, everyone will know He has arrived.

### **The coming of the Son of Man – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

<sup>24</sup>"But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, <sup>25</sup>AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>"And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>"And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.

The signs of the Lord's return will be worldwide, dramatic, and magnificent. The imagery in this passage leaves little doubt that the world will miss His coming.

### **The parable of the fig tree – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

<sup>28</sup>"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>"Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, *right* at the door.

Jesus had cursed a fig tree just a week before because it had all the signs of having fruit, but its signs were false and out of season. When the time is right, all the signs will be compounded upon each other, each in proper order. Then the time for the Lord's return will be near.

### **Only the Father knows when – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

<sup>30</sup>"Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>31</sup>"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. <sup>32</sup>"But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone*. <sup>33</sup>"Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the *appointed* time is. <sup>34</sup>"*It is* like a man, away on a journey,

*who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert.*

In this passage the Lord is speaking of the generation that sees the abomination of desolation in the temple and the signs in the stars and events on earth that He has just mentioned. That generation will not pass away until He makes His dramatic return to earth to set up His kingdom.

Can it be that the Lord really does not know the appointed time of His return? He is God. Why doesn't He know when the time will be? The Lord's statement in this passage is similar to His statement to James and John about the request to sit on His right and left hand in the kingdom. Remember, Jesus said those two positions were not His to give. They belonged to those for whom they were prepared. The time of the Lord's return was not His to tell. Only the Father can speak the words that announce His departure from heaven.

In the meantime, all the followers must manage and care for the work of God here on earth. Many generations will be born who need to know the Lord and we must care for them as believers, pointing them to Jesus.

#### **Be on the alert – Spoken on the Mount of Olives Tuesday evening**

*<sup>35</sup>"Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, or in the morning-- <sup>36</sup>lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. <sup>37</sup>"And what I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!' "*

Since we do not know when He is coming back, we must act as if He is coming today.