

Lesson 3

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree (Monday)

Key Scripture Readings: Mark 11:12-19; Matthew 21:12-13, 18-19; Luke 19:45-48

Fast Facts

- As Jesus and His disciples made their way from Bethany to Jerusalem on Monday morning, He became hungry. He then went to a fig tree, but saw nothing on it but leaves, “for it was not the season for figs.”
- After finding no figs, Jesus then cursed the tree. He said, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!” (Mark 11:14).
- Keep in mind that the time when Jesus curses the fig tree is early spring. It was unusual for the tree to be in full foliage this time of year.
- The common fig tree bears two kinds of fruit each year. The first kind is called “the breba.” The second is the standard figs.
- The breba is an edible fruit that always proceeds the standard figs that are produced later in the year. It is what appears when the fig tree puts out its leaves (when it is not the season for figs). In most cultures, the breba is ignored or only eaten by the poor and animals. Jesus was probably looking for the breba when He went to get food from the tree. It should have been there! Since it was not there, that meant the tree was fruitless (it would not have produced the standard figs in the season for figs).
- The fruitless fig tree represents the nation of Israel during this time. Like the fig tree, the nation had become fruitless! They had become wicked! This can be seen in how the religious leaders and merchants were defiling and misusing the temple (Mark 11:15-19). Jesus cleansed the temple of this corruption! Notice how this incident is sandwiched between the cursing of the fig tree.
- After hearing about Jesus cleansing the temple, the chief priests and scribes began seeking how to destroy Him. They were afraid to seize Him in public because they feared His influence with the people. All the people were astonished at Jesus’ teaching.
- Jesus also healed the blind and lame in the temple (Matthew 21:14).
- Jesus also cleansed the temple very early in His ministry (John 2:13-21).



Study Questions

1. What did Jesus do when He became hungry on Monday morning?
2. What was Jesus expecting to find on the tree? What did He find instead?
3. What should Jesus have found on this fig tree during this time of the year?
4. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? What did His actions represent?
5. What incident occurs after Jesus cursed the fig tree?
6. What did Jesus find going on in the temple? How did He respond?
7. How does this temple cleansing compare and contrast with the first time Jesus did it?
8. What lessons can be taken away from Jesus cursing the fig tree on Monday?
9. What lesson can be taken away from Jesus cleansing the temple?