

The Gospel of Mark

Messiah, King and Priest
Chapter 8-11



Chapter 8

From this moment of clarity about who Jesus really was, Jesus moves deliberately towards Jerusalem. No more do the teachers of the law need to come to him, he is coming to them and to the fulfillment of his mission.

For many commentators this is the pivotal point of the Gospel of Mark. All before has been leading up to answering the question; “Who is Jesus?” All following will answer the question; “What does Jesus being Messiah really mean?”

Chapter 10

Divorce and Remarriage 10:1-12

Across the spectrum of Christian churches this issue is seen in mainly 3 ways;

1. The Bible says divorce and remarriage are never permitted
2. The Bible teaches that divorce and remarriage are permitted in some circumstances.
3. Divorce and remarriage are allowed in all circumstances.

This section is again an attempt by the Pharisees to trick Jesus with a very topical question. Remember the ‘shame/honour’ culture.

 **Why does this question have very strong political overtones?**

Reading a Difficult Passage

What is the context? The question has been asked about giving a certificate of divorce. This question arises from a reading of Deut. 24:1-4 which had become popular during the time of Jesus, and was interpreted as the possibility to divorce a wife for any dissatisfaction the husband might have. This would include that the wife is not as appealing as a younger woman. It is called the ‘Any Cause’ divorce. Jesus is speaking into this particular interpretation of Deut. 24.

Jesus rejected the ‘any cause’ divorce but did not reject, either the Deut. 24 divorce reason or the Exodus 21:10-11 reasons. In Exodus

the slave girl taken by the master as a wife has certain rights; the rights to food, clothing, and love.

Paul taught the same thing. He said that married couples owed each other love (1 Cor. 7:3-5) and material support (1 Cor. 7:33-34). He didn't say that neglect of these rights was the basis of divorce because he didn't need to—it was stated on the marriage certificate. Anyone who was neglected, in terms of emotional support or physical support, could legally claim a divorce.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/october/20.26.html>

Chapter 11 - Priest and King

In this chapter Mark tells his readers the most important stories of Jesus so far. In this chapter Jesus announces to the general populace the clearest yet statement of his Messiahship.

Reading Mark 11

Remember that words only have meaning in sentences and that sentences generally have clear meaning only as part of the larger story.

The most important contextual questions to ask, and they must be asked repeatedly are;

“What’s the point?”

“What is the focus of this passage?”

“What is the story about?”

What is the author saying and why does he or she say it right here?
What is being said next and why?

The Theme

The theme of Mark 11 is the presentation of Jesus to the Jews as king and Messiah. How do we find this out?

Using <http://www.biblegateway.com/>

1. Do a passage search for Mark 11

2. Look at the footnotes at the bottom of the page. The footnote for verse 9 suggests looking at Ps. 118:25, 26. Open another copy of biblegateway.com and look at these verses. This doesn't tell us much.
3. Click on the resources and look at the encyclopedia. Is this story described by any other gospel writer? (Harmonies)
4. Donkey is an important and rather unique word in this story so, do a keyword search for 'donkey' in just the gospels.
5. Matthew 21 comes up as another place that has this story.
6. In the footnotes for Matt 21:5 Zech. 9:9 is mentioned.
7. In the other gateway page open up Zechariah 9.
8. As you read through this passage the theme is obvious. This is the promise of Yahweh to the Jews concerning their salvation by the coming king. This king will bring peace to the land and restore the fortunes of Israel.

The next section of the chapter concerns Jesus going into the temple and having an altercation with the money changers. The footnote for verse 17 suggests Isaiah 56:7 as having relevance to what Jesus did.

1. Do a passage search for Isaiah 56
2. As you read the passage there is a strong sense that the Temple is God's house, His dwelling place. Not only that, God wishes the temple to be available for all of mankind.
3. Look also at the footnote that suggests Jeremiah 7
4. Go to Jeremiah 7
5. As you read through this chapter to verse 11 the theme is God warning the Jews to keep the covenant correctly. He makes the point that just because you have the temple does not make you safe.

So now we add to the theme of the promised Messiah the importance of the Jews not trusting in the temple for their safety.

Jesus' action then had far more importance than just throwing out a few money changers; it was about the Jews trusting in the wrong thing for salvation.

The Geographical Context

This shows that the temple was built on Mount Moriah, called the Temple Mount.

The map also shows that if Jesus and the disciples are coming into Jerusalem from Bethany then they would be coming through the Kidron Valley and so would be looking up at the Temple Mount when verse 23 is said.

The Immediate Audience

The disciples had been observing all of the actions described in chapter 11. They were Jews who believed very much in the importance of the Temple. What might they have been thinking?

Are we going to lose even this temple? Is God going to abandon us even further? If the fig tree died because it did not produce any fruit are we in the same danger?

To the disciples Jesus' comment is to have faith that God will bring the right way of worship and covenant relationship; that the Messiah will bring a better way of worship. Jesus was asking them to trust in God not in the ways of mankind, even when those ways are about worshiping God.

Conclusion – what did it say for them?

Chapter 11 describes Jesus coming to be the true king and the true temple. Amongst the upheaval that this brings keep faith in God, He will come through.

Both the immediate and the chapter context then lead us to the following:

- I. Trust God: he will work out his plan for Israel and the world (v.22).
- II. Believe that God will tear down the obstacle to belief (the old temple structure), as overly-final as that may seem (v.23).
- III. Believe God that he will re-establish his people, and you will receive God's favour (v.24).
- IV. As difficult as it will be, become the community that mediates God's forgiveness in the world (v.25).

Conclusion – What does this mean for us?

There are several ideas which may spring from this scripture;

1. As the Jews believed, while the Messiah went against many of their ideas, Jesus was to be trusted.
2. Be careful of making trust in 'religious' ideas or customs a substitute for trusting God.
3. I will continue to have faith that God is building his kingdom and that he wants me to live as a kingdom person in order to show others what the kingdom looks like.