



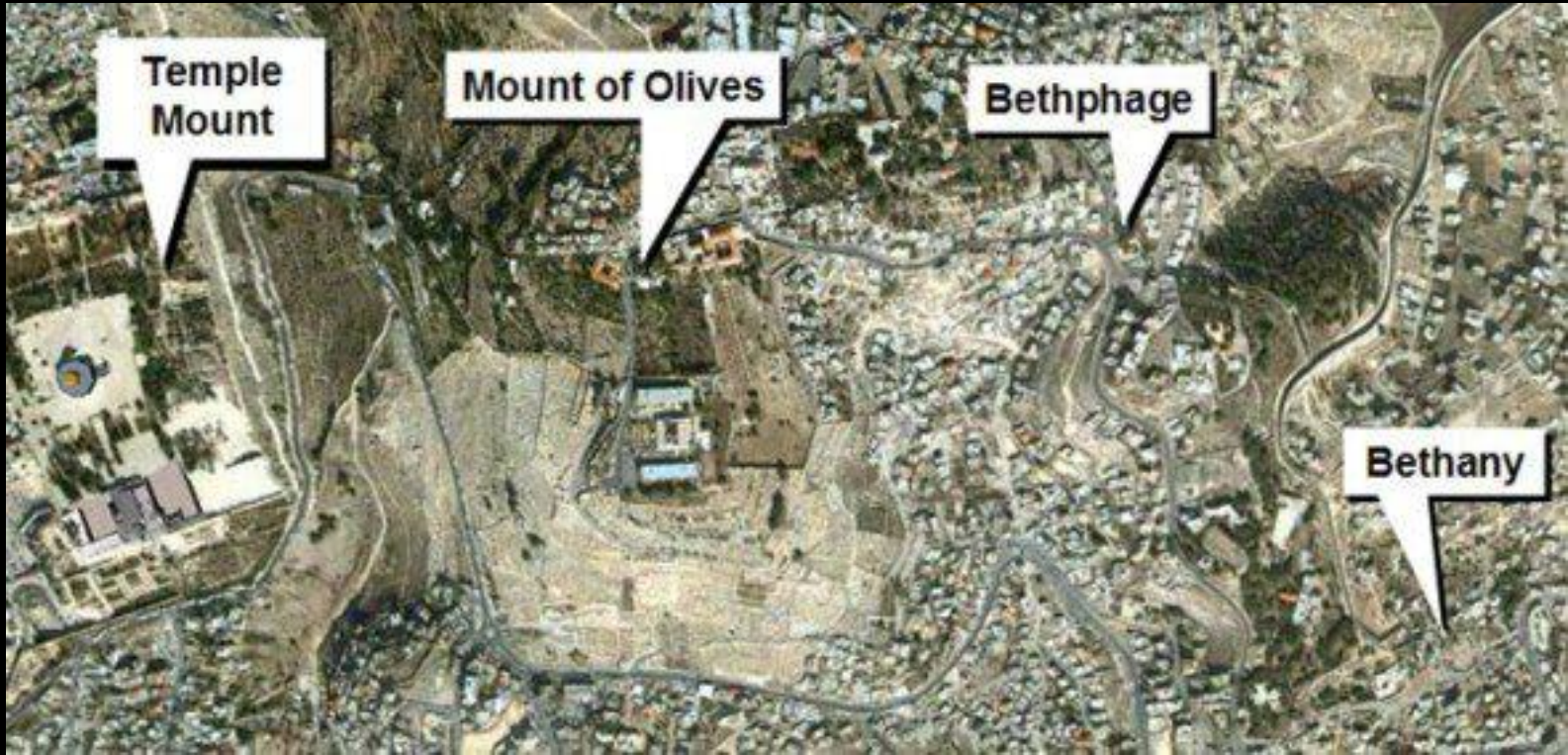






Mark 11:1-11

¹¹Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.



Temple to Bethany = about 2 miles (30-45 min walk)



Mark 11:12-25

¹²The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.
¹³Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

Mark 11:12-25

¹⁵On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

Mark 11:12-25

¹⁸The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

¹⁹When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

Mark 11:12-25

²⁰In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. ²¹Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

Mark 11:12-25

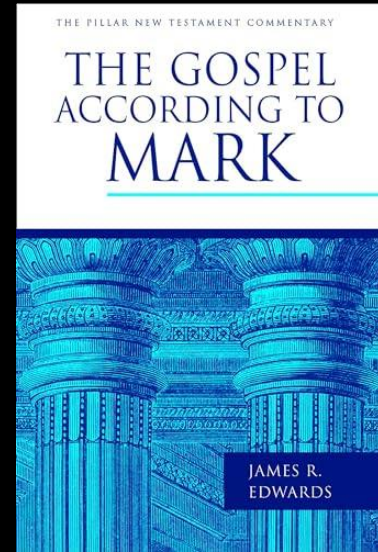
²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. ²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”



Today's Message:
A Tree. A Temple. Us!
Mark 11:12-25

The earliest commentary on the Gospel of Mark by Victor of Antioch in the fifth century already understood the event as an *enacted parable*, in which the cursing of the fig tree symbolized the judgment to befall Jerusalem. Mark's sandwich technique demonstrates that Victor of Antioch surmised correctly. Mark's placement of the cursing of the fig tree and Jesus' action in the temple in an A¹-B-A² sandwich pattern signifies that he intends readers to see in the fate of the unfruitful fig tree the judgment of God on the unfruitful temple.

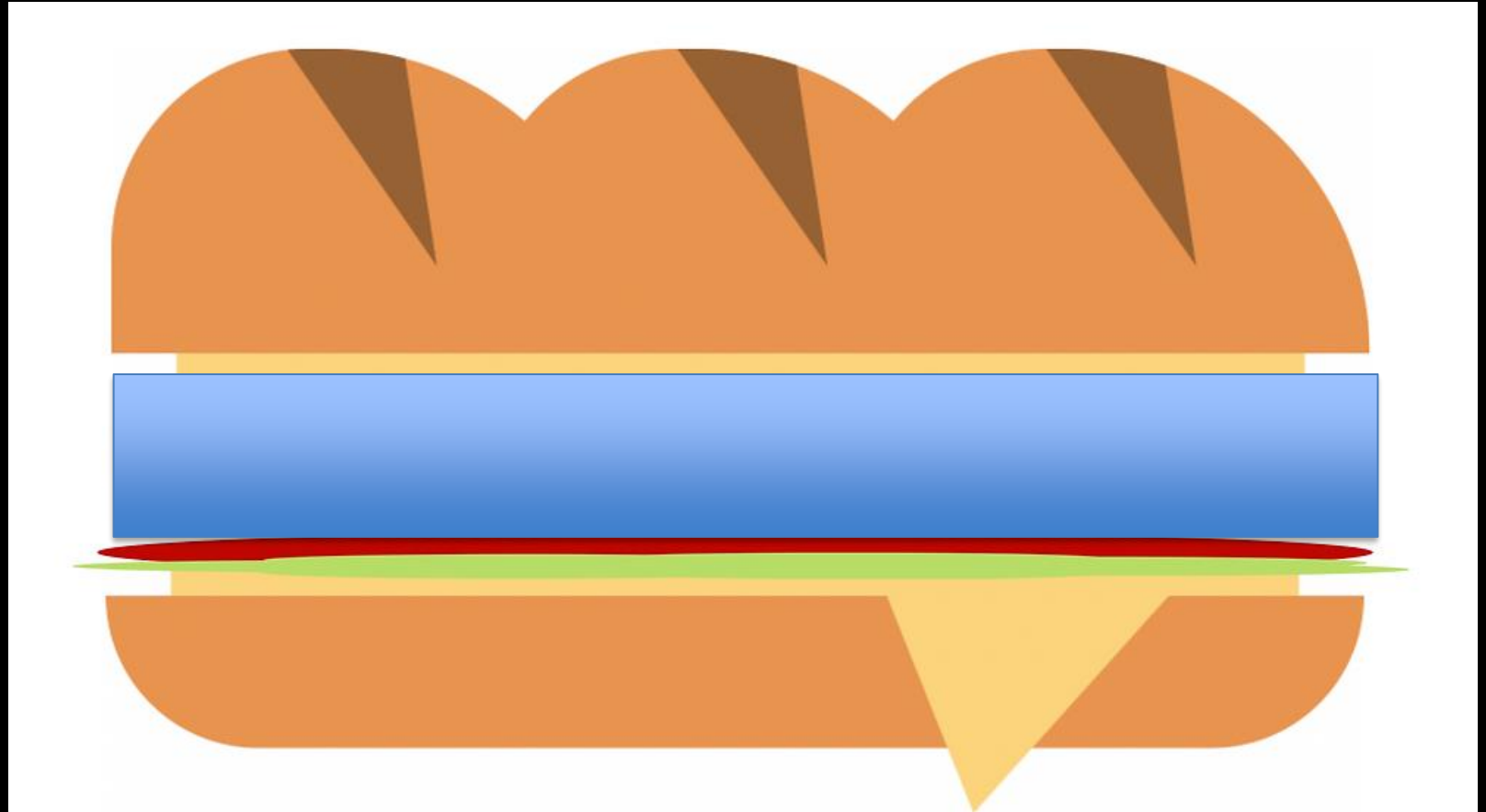
~ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*,
The Pillar New Testament Commentary, page 339.



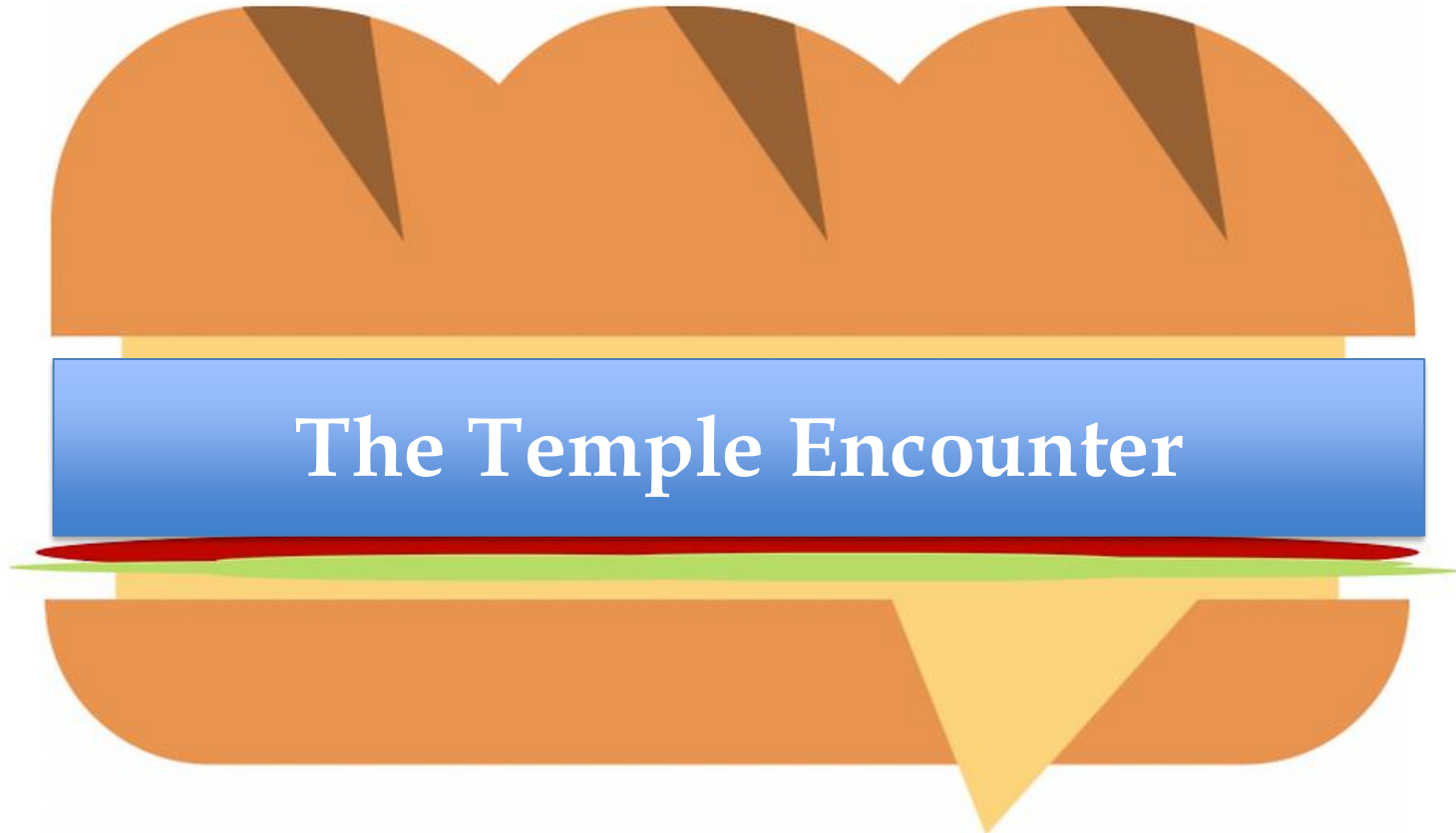


MARKAN SANDWICHES

The Parts to this Sandwich



The Parts to this Sandwich



The Temple Encounter

The Parts to this Sandwich

A graphic of a sandwich with three layers of text. The top layer is a brown bun with three triangular slices of darker brown filling. The middle layer is a blue rectangular slice with white text. The bottom layer is a brown bun with a yellow triangular slice of filling. The text 'The Fig Tree' is centered on the top bun, 'The Temple Encounter' is centered on the blue slice, and 'The Temple Encounter' is also centered on the bottom bun.

The Fig Tree

The Temple Encounter

The Temple Encounter

The Parts to this Sandwich

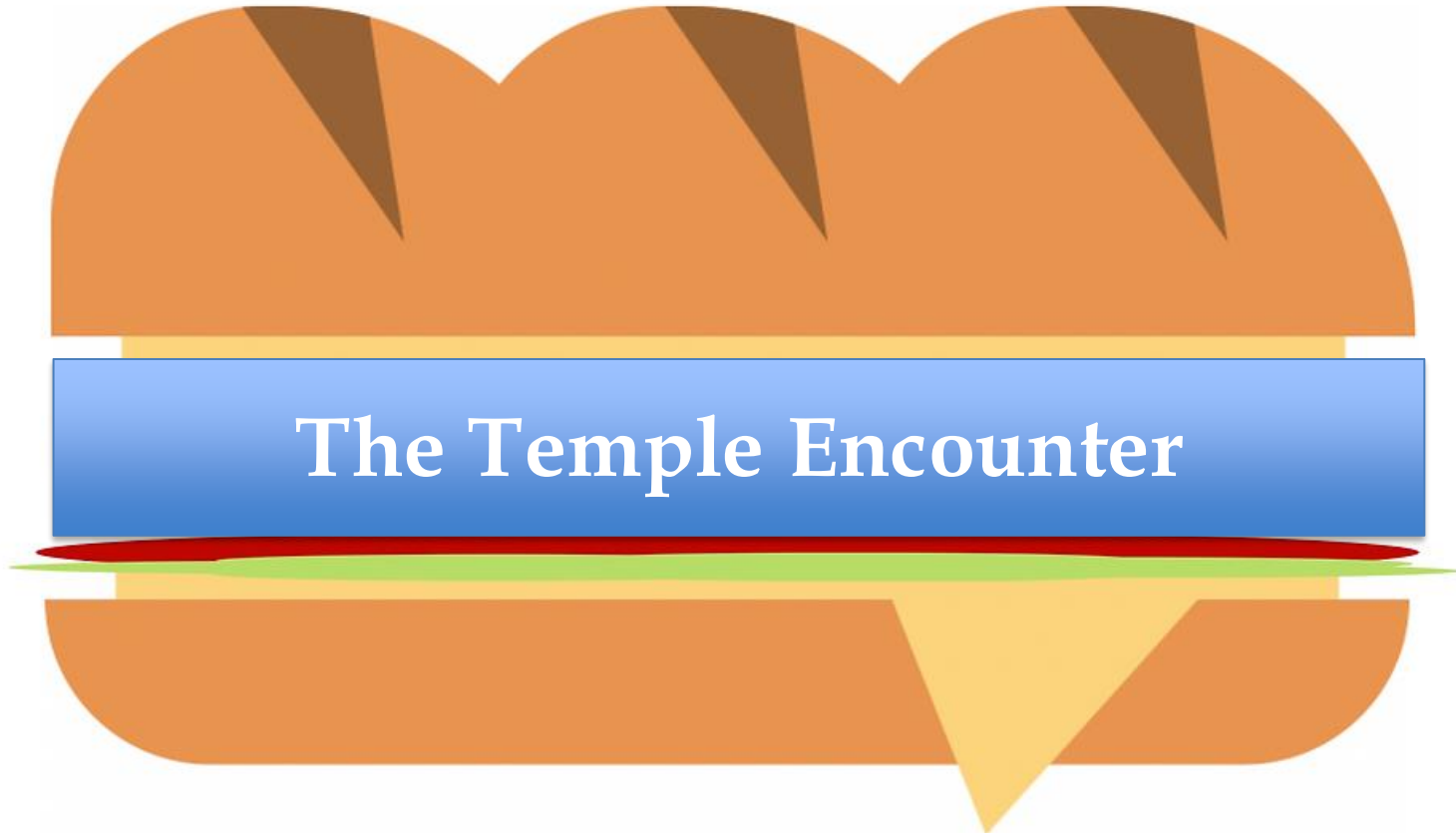


The Fig Tree

The Temple Encounter

The Teaching

The Parts to this Sandwich



The Temple Encounter

The Temple Encounter

The Confrontation

Mark 11:15-18

¹⁵On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

“a house of prayer for all nations”

Isaiah 56:6-7

⁶And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant — ⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

“a den of robbers”

Jeremiah 7:1-15

¹This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“Stand at the gate of the LORD’s house and there proclaim this message: “ ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD. ³This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. ⁴Do not trust in deceptive words and say, “This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!”

“a den of robbers”

Jeremiah 7:1-15

⁵If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, ⁶if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, ⁷then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever. ⁸But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.

“a den of robbers”

Jeremiah 7:1-15

9 “Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, ¹⁰and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, “We are safe” – safe to do all these detestable things? ¹¹Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.

“a den of robbers”

Jeremiah 7:1-15

¹²“ ‘Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. ¹³While you were doing all these things, declares the LORD, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer. ¹⁴Therefore, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your ancestors. ¹⁵I will thrust you from my presence, just as I did all your fellow Israelites, the people of Ephraim.’

The Temple Encounter

The Confrontation

Mark 11:15-18

¹⁸The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.



The Parts to this Sandwich

A graphic of a sandwich with three layers of text. The top layer is a brown bun with three triangular slices of darker brown filling. The middle layer is a blue rectangular slice. The bottom layer is a brown bun with a yellow triangular slice. The text is centered on each layer.

The Fig Tree

The Temple Encounter

The Fig Tree

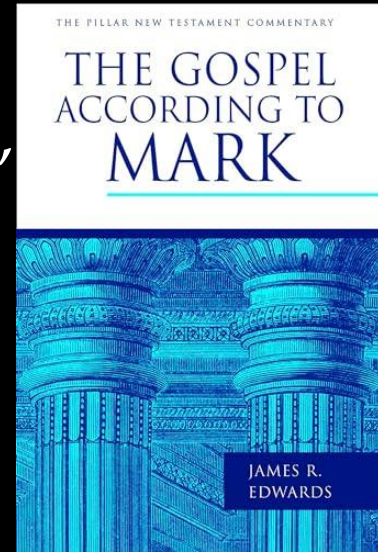
Part One – The Cursing

Mark 11:12-14, 19-21

¹²The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.
¹³Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

The most puzzling part of the brief narrative of the cursing of the fig tree is the end of 11:13, “because it was not the season of figs.” This phrase is usually understood to exonerate the tree for not producing fruit since it was not yet the season. Understood as such, the phrase makes Jesus’ curse vindictive and irrational... But this is neither the only nor the best way to understand the phrase. It is better simply to distinguish between mature figs (Gk. *sykē*; Heb. *te’anim*) and early or unripe figs (Heb. *paggim*). The end of v. 13 might be paraphrased, “It was, of course, not the season for figs, but it was for *paggim*.”

~ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*,
The Pillar New Testament Commentary, page 340.



The Fig Tree

Part Two – The Result

Mark 11:12-14, 19-21

¹⁹When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

²⁰In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. ²¹Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”





The Parts to this Sandwich



The Fig Tree

The Temple Encounter

The Teaching

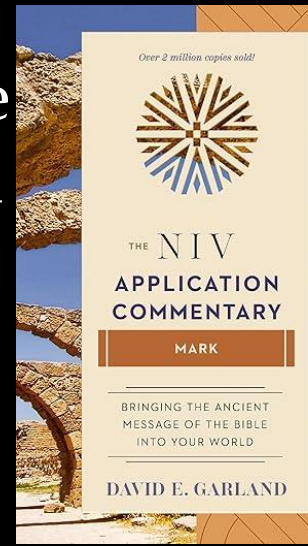
The Teaching

The New Way of the Kingdom – NOT “This” Mountain

Mark 11:12-25

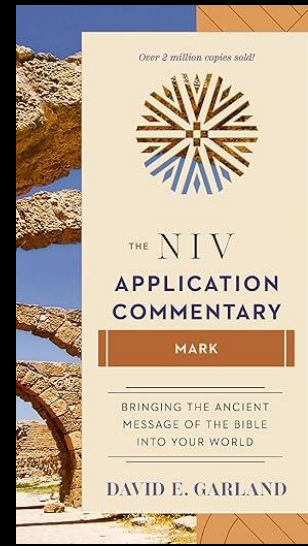
²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. ²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

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. The holy place is wherever disciples preach Jesus' gospel and wherever his people, Jews and Gentiles, gather.

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



The Teaching

The New Way of the Kingdom - Faith

Mark 11:12-25

²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. ²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

The Teaching

The New Way of the Kingdom – Gospel Living

Mark 11:12-25

²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. ²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”





Relationship with God is based simply on faith and forgiveness. If one can unleash God's power by faith and find forgiveness through prayer and a forgiving spirit, the temple [system] has been bypassed, and a house of prayer that has become a den of brigands has no more use than a dead fig tree. God's power will become available to those, including Gentiles, who have faith that it can be unleashed apart from the temple. The temple with its priesthood, sacrifices, and taxes is no longer the place of God's presence, where one meets God and where sins are forgiven. By the time Mark writes, the temple is either besieged or already destroyed. He wants to convey to his readers that broken altars do not prejudice atonement with God.

~ David E. Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary
(Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 442



**The Gospel allows
me to:**



**The Gospel allows
me to:**

1. Stop Pretending



**The Gospel allows
me to:**

1. Stop Pretending
2. Allow myself to be
“the bad guy”



The Gospel allows me to:

1. Stop Pretending
2. Allow myself to be
“the bad guy”
3. Not have to defend
myself



The Gospel allows me to:

1. Stop Pretending
2. Allow myself to be “the bad guy”
3. Not have to defend myself
4. Realize I have no moral authority



The Gospel allows me to:

1. Stop Pretending
2. Allow myself to be “the bad guy”
3. Not have to defend myself
4. Realize I have no moral authority
5. Be transformed by God’s power to be different

