

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Challenges in the Temple

Mark 11:1 - 12:40

### Opening

Gathering: How does it feel when someone asks you a difficult question with no clear good answer?

Today's Focus: Jesus spent the first couple of days of His final week in the temple challenging and being challenged by the religious leaders.

Key Verses: *The Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap Him in His words.* Matthew 22:15

*From then on no one dared ask Him any more questions.* Mark 12:34

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

Palm Sunday (*Mark 11:1-11*)

How did Jesus begin the last week of His ministry?

John 12:1, 12-15

What did He do when He arrived in Jerusalem?

Mark 11:11

No Figgy Pudding (*Mark 11:12-14, 20-26*)

How did Jesus begin His last Monday?

Mark 11:12-14

What effect did this curse from Jesus have?

Mark 11:20-21

How could this dead, fruitless tree serve as a faith lesson for Jesus' disciples?

James 2:26

How did Jesus make sure the disciples caught this lesson?

Mark 11:22-25

What might be a later scribal addition because v25 is so similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 6:14?

Mark 11:26 (see NIV note)

Temple Déjà Vu (*Mark 11:15-18*)

What did Jesus do on Monday after cursing the fig tree?

Mark 11:15-17

Why does this story sound like we already studied it?

John 2:13-17

Bazaars of Annas - Temple marketplace owned by High Priest Annas

Animals for sacrifice were to be unblemished as approved by a priest

Certified animals were available for purchase in the temple markets

Unclean Roman money needed to be changed to clean temple money for offerings

How did the leaders react to Jesus' attack on the Bazaars of Annas at the beginning of His ministry?

John 2:18-22

How did the leaders react to Jesus' attack on the Bazaars of Annas at the end of His ministry?

Mark 11:18

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Jesus Came to Draw All to Himself (*John 12:20-50*)

What story did John record that is believed to have taken place on this Monday?

John 12:20-22

What did Jesus feel was important to tell these Greeks and the rest of the crowd?

John 12:23-24 (23-26)

How did Jesus feel about what lay in store for Him now that *the hour has come*?

John 12:27

Was the purpose of His hour so that He would be glorified?

John 12:28

Did the Father speak in order to encourage Jesus during His time of trouble?

John 12:29-30

How was it for the benefit of the people and of the Greeks who had come to Him?

John 12:31-33

What else are we told about Jesus' last Monday?

Mark 11:19

Challenged by Jewish Leadership (*Mark 11:27-33*)

How did Jesus spend the next few days of His last week?

Luke 21:37-38

What did Jesus do on Tuesday after He used the dead fig tree to teach His disciples about living faith?

Mark 11:27

Did the Jewish priests, teachers and elders come to try to arrest Jesus or kick Him out of the temple?

Mark 11:28

How did Jesus answer their challenge?

Mark 11:29-32

How did they decide to respond?

Mark 11:33

Challenges to the Jewish Leadership (*Mark 12:1-11*)

How did Jesus turn the table and challenge the Jewish leaders' claim to authority?

Mark 12:1a

What was the first parable we have that Jesus gave in response to their challenge?

Matthew 21:28-30

How did Jesus point the leaders to His point in this parable?

Matthew 21:31-32

What parable did He then give that is the only one included in Matthew, Mark and Luke?

Matthew 21:33-34

Why is this called the Parable of the Tenants?

Matthew 21:35-37

Did the tenants accept the landowner's son?

Matthew 21:38-39

How did Jesus get the leaders to incriminate themselves in this parable?

Matthew 21:40-41

How did Jesus make sure they recognized that they were the wicked tenants?

Matthew 21:42-44

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### Setting a Trap (*Mark 12:12-13*)

How did the Jewish leaders feel about Jesus' parables?

Mark 12:12

Since they were afraid of the crowd's support of Jesus, what did the Jewish leaders try next?

Luke 20:20

To what extent would they go to try to trap Jesus?

Mark 12:13

Pharisees opposed foreign rule of Romans, Herodians supported Herod – Rome-appointed king

### Strike 1 - Support God or the Government? (*Mark 12:14-17*)

How did these spies pretend to be honest in order to get Jesus to speak carelessly?

Matthew 22:15-16

How did they then try to trap Jesus?

Matthew 22:17

If Jesus said yes, He would appear to side with the Romans and alienate the Jews

If He said no, He would be promoting law-breaking and could be arrested

Did Jesus recognize the trap?

Matthew 22:18

How did Jesus answer this unanswerable question?

Matthew 22:19-21

What was the result of this trap?

Matthew 22:22

### Strike 2 - Heavenly Complications (*Mark 12:18-27*)

What group of the Jewish Leadership Entrapment Tag Team tried next?

Mark 12:18

What trap did this group try to set for Jesus?

Mark 12:19-23

Did Jesus recognize the trap?

Mark 12:24-25

How did He turn the table on this group?

Mark 12:26-27

What was the result of this trap?

Matthew 22:33

### Strike 3 - The Lawyer's Expertise (*Mark 12:28-31*)

What group of the Jewish Leadership Entrapment Tag Team decided to take another shot?

Matthew 22:34-35

What was the challenging trap?

Mark 12:28

How did Jesus answer this unanswerable question?

Mark 12:29-30

How did Jesus go further to reveal the importance of the question and answer?

Mark 12:31

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### The Lawyer's Reaction (*Mark 12:32-34*)

- How did the expert lawyer respond to Jesus' answer?  
Mark 12:32-33
- How did Jesus respond to the lawyer's understanding?  
Mark 12:34a

### The Trap Springs Back (*Mark 12:35-37*)

- After withstanding the traps of the Jewish leaders, how did Jesus turn the tables?  
Matthew 22:41-42
- How did this become a trap for the Pharisees?  
Matthew 22:43-45
- What did the Jewish leadership decide after their traps backfired?  
Matthew 22:46

### Warnings for the Crowd (*Mark 12:37-40*)

- What did the people in the crowd think of this contest of spiritual wits?  
Mark 12:37
- What did Jesus say to the crowd after these challenges were ended?  
Mark 12:38-40
- Why did Jesus see the hypocritical spiritual leaders as so dangerous?  
Matthew 23:13
- Matthew records a more complete version of Jesus' warnings in Matthew 23  
See the study *Scribes and Pharisees* (NT409) for more detailed insights

### Closing Prayer

## Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. What fruits have my faith produced?  
(*Mark 11:12-14, 20-24; Matthew 7:15-20; 12:33; 13:18-23; Luke 6:43-45; John 15:1-17; James 2:14-26; 3:11-12*)
2. When have I caught myself in a sin and repented (turned from that sin)?  
(*Matthew 21:28-32; Jonah 3; Luke 19:8-9; Acts 26:9-20; Romans 2:1-8; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Revelation 3:2-3*)
3. When have I had good intentions to follow God only to fall away?  
(*Matthew 21:28-32; Nehemiah 9; Mark 4:13-20; 14:27-31, 66-72; Galatians 3:6-9; Revelation 2:4-5*)
4. How well do I give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's?  
(*Mark 12:13-17; Nehemiah 10:35; Psalm 116:12; Malachi 3:8-10; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17*)
5. In what ways have I lived in the hypocrisy that Jesus warned against?  
(*Matthew 6:1-18; 23:1-32; Mark 7:6-8; 13:38-40; 1 John 2:3-6; 4:20*)