

# The Miracles of Jesus

## Lesson Thirty-Seven

### Cursing the Fig Tree

Text: Matthew 21:18-21; Mark 11:12-24

#### Introduction:

1. After healing the blind men near Jericho, Jesus made an important stop at the house of Zacchaeus, where He taught several significant lessons (Luke 19:1-27).
2. Afterward, He set out for Jerusalem, passing through Bethany (Luke 19:28; John 11:55 – 12:11).
3. On the next day, Jesus entered Jerusalem and was received with great ceremony by the people (Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19).
4. This event – Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem – must be discussed to understand properly the miracle that followed.
  - a. This event was planned (Matthew 21:1-3).
  - b. This event was prophesied (Matthew 21:4-5; Zechariah 9:9).
  - c. This event demonstrated the humility of Jesus (Matthew 21:6-7).
    - i. Jesus rode upon a borrowed animal.
    - ii. He rode without a saddle, but upon the outer garments of common men – His disciples.
    - iii. He rode upon the lowliest of animals – the colt of a beast of burden.
  - d. This event manifested the royalty of Jesus.
    - i. He fulfilled the prophecy concerning Israel’s King.
    - ii. He entered the town with the procession of a King.
    - iii. He was treated as a King.
  - e. This event showed the divinity of Jesus (Matthew 21:8-9; Mark 11:8-10; Luke 19:36-44; John 12:12-19).
  - f. This event illustrated the need of the people (Matthew 21:10-17).
5. Following His entry into Jerusalem, we read of a miracle of great symbolism and power.

#### I. The Miracle

- A. After visiting the Temple, Jesus returned to Bethany where He spent the night.
- B. As He returned to Jerusalem the next morning, He was hungry.
- C. In the distance, Jesus saw in the road a fig tree bearing leaves.
  1. This tree was “in the way,” meaning that it was alongside or in the road; thus, it was public property – anyone could eat from it.
  2. Because it had leaves, Jesus came to it expecting to find fruit on it.
  3. In that part of the world, fig trees produce their fruit before the leaves emerge.
  4. When Mark says that “the time of figs was not yet,” he means that it was not time for the harvest of figs.
  5. Thus, the figs should have been produced but not picked.

6. So, from every outward appearance, this tree was healthy and productive.
  7. However, upon arriving at the tree, Jesus saw that it was worthless, for it produced no fruit.
- D. When He saw that the tree had leaves but no figs, Jesus cursed the tree.
1. The idea of cursing does not imply something done in anger or with the use of vulgar language (Mark 11:21).
  2. Instead, it means that Jesus pronounced the doom of this tree.
  3. He said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever."
- E. Following this, Jesus went into the Temple again and returned to Bethany that night.
- F. On the next morning, as He and His disciples journeyed into Jerusalem, they saw that the tree was withered away, dried up from the roots.
- G. Jesus used this miracle to teach His disciples the importance and power of faith.

## II. The Manifestation

- A. This miracle demonstrated the authority, power, and deity of Jesus.
- B. However, it also illustrated His righteous judgment.

## III. The Message

- A. Jesus used this miracle to teach about faith, prayer, and forgiveness.
  1. This was true in a unique way during the age of miracles.
  2. This was especially true for the Apostles of Christ.
  3. However, the principles are still true for Christians today.
- B. This miracle illustrates God's condemnation of hypocrisy.
- C. This miracle illustrates God's condemnation of fruitlessness.
- D. This miracle illustrates the true condition of the Jews gathered in Jerusalem.
  1. They had failed to obey the Law of Moses.
  2. They had rejected the prophets of God.
  3. They were rejecting the Messiah, the Son of God.
  4. They pretended to be righteous but bore no fruit (Matthew 21:33-43).
  5. Thus, Jesus pronounced judgment upon them (Luke 19:41-48).
  6. Their withering from the roots up would happen sooner than they knew.
- E. This miracle illustrates the righteous and certain judgment of God.