



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew

## Chapter 21

Bishop Youssef



# Introduction

## The Chapter Main Points:

- The significance of the triumphal entry, cleansing the temple, cursing the fig tree
- The conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders



# An Overview

- Jesus began His Last Week before His crucifixion with a triumphant entry into Jerusalem (1-11)
- Followed with dramatic acts:
  1. driving the moneychangers from the temple (12-17)
  2. cursing the barren fig tree (18-22)
- His authority was soon challenged (23-27)
- Jesus told the parables of the two sons and the wicked vinedressers (28-46)

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- The triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem from Bethania, was on the first day of the week
- *Bethphage*, was a village of the priests, and signifies the house of figs and dates, situated on the declivity of Mount Olivet, about a mile to the east of Jerusalem, a sabbath-day's journey
- Mount Olives was so called from the abundance of olive trees which grew upon it

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- The names of the two disciples are not named in any of the Gospels
- The fact that Peter and John were sent on a like errand in Luke 22:8 makes it, perhaps, probable that they were employed in this instance
- In verse 5 St. Matthew reveals that this was to fulfill the prophecies of the restoration of Israel by the Messiah spoken by the prophets Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9
- This is the 9<sup>th</sup> of the "fulfillment statements" in Matthew's Gospel

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- Donkeys and mules were in common use in Palestine: horses were seldom to be met with
- They were to claim the right to use the beasts as for the service of a King, not to hire or ask permission
- Our blessed Lord takes every opportunity to convince His disciples that nothing was hidden from Him
- He informs them of the most minute occurrence; and manifested His power over the heart in disposing the owner to permit the donkey to be taken away



# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- Not our Lord, or your Lord, but the Lord, of all, both of the beasts and of their masters, and of every creature
- Christ here discovers two of his own attributes, His omniscience and His supreme dominion
- Now this was done not by accident or to avoid fatigue, but as the evangelist declares, to accomplish the prophecy of Isaiah and Zechariah

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- He is coming now meek, full of kindness and compassion to those who were plotting His destruction
- He comes to deliver up Himself into their hands; their king comes to be murdered by His subjects, and to make His death a ransom price for their souls
- The triumphal entry into Jerusalem was indeed the triumph of humility over pride and worldly grandeur; of poverty over riches; and of meekness and gentleness over rage and malice



# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- The disciples followed Jesus' instructions and brought a donkey and its colt
- St. Mark and St. Luke give more graphically an account of their finding the colt, of the question asked by the owner and of their answering in the words they had been told to use, "*The Lord has need of them.*"
- They laid garments on both animals and Jesus sat on the garments on the colt that it was with its mother was a sign that the colt had never been ridden

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- *and set Him on them*, led some to suppose that Christ rode upon both the donkey and the colt
- The very general opinion is that He first sat upon the donkey for a short time, and then mounted the colt
- It may be asked why Jesus, who through humility had during his whole life travelled on foot, and in no one previous instance is found to have allowed Himself the convenience of riding, should on this occasion enter Jerusalem riding?

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- One reason was to fulfill the prophecy
- Other reasons were, to give a slight example of His real kingly dignity before He suffered; to be publicly acknowledged for the Messiah; to confirm the faith of His disciples; and to leave His enemies no excuse for their disbelief
- St. John Chrysostom, (hom. lxvi.) challenges the Jews to show him any other king of theirs, who had entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey
- Part of the crowd had come with Him from Galilee, part streamed from Bethany, excited by the recent resurrection of Lazarus (John 12:17)

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- *Spread their garments in the way*, This, again, was a recognized act of homage to a king
- *Cut down branches from the trees*, St. John says that these were the branches of palm trees (Jn 12:13); rather, the wide, spreading, branch-like leaves of the palm tree, well fitted to form a soft, level carpet
- The only branches of the palm tree are its leafy crown
- *Hosanna*, or *hosiah-na*, was an acclamation of the Jews: when applied to God, means *save us, I beseech Thee*; when applied to a sovereign prince, means *vivat*, in Latin, or long live the king

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- Some understand that the word *Hosanna* directed to Christ Himself, and the sense to be, Save us, O the Son of David; others understand *Hosanna*, directed to *God*, as if the people said, Save, O Lord, this our king; by which the people wished peace, safety, and prosperity to Jesus their Messiah
- *He who comes in the name of the Lord*, The words are taken in part from Psalm 118:25,26, a hymn which belonged to the great hallelujah chanted at the end of the Paschal Supper and the Feast of Tabernacles
- The people were accustomed to apply it to the Messiah

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- The strength of the word “*moved*” conveys the tremendous excitement with which Jesus was greeted by the pilgrims to the festival and the citizens of Jerusalem
- The sight of such a multitude, the shouts of the people, and the triumphant procession through the city, excited much attention and inquiry
- The procession burst into full view of Jerusalem as it appeared on the Mount of Olives, 200 feet higher than the temple mount



# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- There, as the city appeared in all its splendor, according to Luke, He stopped and wept over its coming sorrows (Lk 19:41-44)
- It was in the midst of these acclamations that Christ wept, and foretold the destruction of the city
- The inquiry arose everywhere, Who is this ?

# The Triumphal Entry (21:1-11)



- The crowd that followed Jesus to Jerusalem recognized Him as "the prophet."
- It was the answer of the simple and candid people
- He is the fulfillment of God's promise to Moses and the Israelites in Deuteronomy 18:18
- *I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kinsmen, and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him.*



# Jesus Cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)

- According to St. Mark, on this day, after the triumphal entry, Jesus entered the temple, looked around, perhaps to note the abuses, and then at evening went out to Bethany (Mk 11:11)
- The next day, returning, He again entered the temple, and did the cleansing that is here recorded
- He went into the temple, not as a worshiper, but as its Lord
- The merchants in the Temple area were selling doves that were the sacrifices of the poor ( Lev 12:6-8,14:22,15:14,29)

# Jesus Cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)



- The Jews came to the temple from all parts of Judea
- Because some came from a distance they did not bring with them their sacrifices, but purchased them at Jerusalem
- They were also exchanging coins that bore pagan images or the images of the Roman emperor that were not accepted to purchase sacrifices or for Temple donations in exchange for Jewish coinage that bore no forbidden images (Ex 20:4)

# Jesus Cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)



- Jesus going to the Temple fulfills the prophecy of the prophet Malachi 3:1-2
- The outer courtyard called the Court of the Gentiles was the only area of the Temple complex where Gentiles were allowed to come to pray, to give sacrifices that priests would take to the altar for them and to be instructed about the One True God
- Non-covenant members were forbidden to enter the other areas of the Temple complex or to approach the altar and could be executed for such an offense



# Jesus Cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)

- St. Jerome here admires this as one of the greatest of Christ's miracles, that a poor man should be permitted to cast the *buyers* and *sellers* out of the temple, to overturn their stalls, their money-tables, and the seats of those who were selling doves without any opposition
- *My house shall be called the house of prayer* - This is taken from Isaiah 56:7 and speaks of Gentiles coming to the House of God
- *But you have made it a den of thieves* - This is taken from Jeremiah 7:11 and it condemns the priesthood and the people prior to the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians for turning God's house into a "den of thieves"





# Jesus Cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)

- Jesus gives another sign of how He fulfills the prophecies of Isaiah that refer to the Messiah healing the lame and curing the blind (Isa 35:5-6)
- Having condemned the profane use of the temple, He now shows the proper use of it
- It is a house of prayer, where God is to manifest His goodness and power in giving sight to the spiritually blind, and feet to the lame



# Jesus Cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)

- The Chief Priests were displeased, not only at the authority Jesus had assumed over the temple, but at the acclamations of approval, the cries of the children, and the evident favor of the people
- The purification of the profaned temple was suppose to have been done by them
- The chief priests and the scribes can see Jesus' miraculous acts and yet they are blinded by their jealousy

# Jesus Cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)



- In contrast to their adamant blindness, the innocent children proclaim Jesus the Davidic Messiah, to the astonishment of the religious hierarchy who demand that Jesus stop them
- It was a common thing among the Jews for the children to be employed in public acclamations
- This shouting of the children was therefore no strange thing in the land
- They were angry only because they had a rooted hatred against Him the person who was celebrated
- Instead, Jesus challenges them on their knowledge of Scripture and quotes to them from Psalm 8:2

# Jesus Cleanses the Temple (21:12-17)



- Bethany was a village about two miles distant from Jerusalem, by Mount Olivet, John 11:18; and it is remarkable that from this day till His death, which happened about six days after, He spent not one night in Jerusalem, but went every evening to Bethany, and returned to the city each morning Luke 21:37; Luke 22:39; John 8:1-2
- During the eventful week, He seems to have passed His nights, until Thursday, at the home of Lazarus
- In Mark 11:11 we are told the Twelve Apostles accompanied Him

# The Fig Tree Withered (21:18-19)



- In this passage Jesus performs another symbolic act in cursing the fruitless fig tree
- St. Mark tells us that it was not even the season for figs (Mk 11:13)
- The fig tree is the only fruit bearing tree named in Eden (Gen 3:7)
- The fruitful fig tree was a sign of the good things promised the covenant people in the Promised Land (Deut 8:8)
- Proverbs 27:18 talks about fig tree *Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit, So he who waits on his master will be honored*

# The Fig Tree Withered (21:18-19)



- And the prophet Jeremiah compared an Israel under the curse of divine judgment to a fruitless fig tree (Jer 8:13)
- In St. Luke's Gospel Jesus told His disciples a parable about a fig tree planted in a vineyard that failed to produce fruit
- The owner of the vineyard complained to his vinedresser that for three years the tree had failed to produce fruit and told the vinedresser to cut it down
- The vinedresser urged the owner to leave it for just a little while longer so he could fertilize it



# The Fig Tree Withered (21:18-19)



- If it still failed to bear fruit, then he could cut it down (Lk 13:6-9)
- Jesus has spent at least three years calling the covenant people to bear the good fruit of repentance and to recognize Him as the promised Messiah
- They have failed to bear "good fruit" and there is no more time
- The hunger of Christ was a figure of His extreme desire of finding it productive of good works, (and there is no time nor season when the servants of God can be excused from bringing forth good works)

# The Fig Tree Withered (21:18-19)



- Cursing the fig tree is a prophetic sign of judgment against an unfaithful generation led by failed shepherds
- Christ had often exercised His power to do good, but now for the first time shows Himself able to punish
- Thus He testifies to the apostles and to the Jews themselves, that He could with a word have made His crucifiers wither away, and therefore that He willingly bore the extremity of the sufferings He should in a few days have to undergo, (St. Chrysostom, hom. lxviii.)

# The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree (21:20-22)



- It was rather the power and wonder of the act than the deeper significance of it that moved the disciples
- The miracle was to them an “act of power” or a “wonder” rather than a “sign”
- Instead of telling the disciples, in reply to their question, by what means He, in the exercise of His divine power, caused the tree to wither, He informs them how they too might perform similar and even greater wonders (Jn 14:12), namely, through an unwavering faith in Him (Mt 17:20), a faith which would likewise secure a favorable answer to all their prayers

# The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree (21:20-22)



- He that has faith will get through every difficulty and perplexity; mountains shall become molehills or plains before him
- The participation in the life of Christ would make them partakers of the divine power of which He was the organ, would be a guarantee that their prayers would always be in harmony with the will of God, and so would prevent the promise from being in any way abused

# The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree (21:20-22)



- Removing mountains, and rooting up of mountains, are phrases very generally used to signify the removing or conquering great difficulties - getting through perplexities
- In this sense our Lord's words are to be understood
- The saying is neither to be taken in its literal sense, nor is it hyperbolic: it is a proverbial form of speech, which no Jew could misunderstand, and with which no Christian ought to be puzzled



# Jesus' Authority Questioned (21:23-27)



- In the past the Pharisees and scribes have attempted to "test" Jesus by posing questions to Him in the hopes of trapping Him with His answer (Mt 12:10,38-39; 16:1; 19:3)
- This time Jesus' prophetic acts challenged their authority
- As our Lord now openly appeared as the Messiah, the chief priests and scribes were much offended, especially because He exposed and removed the abuses they encouraged
- They have decided to arrest Him (21:46) and so they confront Him and demand to know the source of His authority to act as He has
- If He says His authority comes from God they will arrest Him on the charge of blasphemy



# Jesus' Authority Questioned (21:23-27)



- Each time He avoided their trap
- This time Jesus turns the tables on them
- He challenges their right to interrogate Him on the ground of precedent
- The subject of the question itself is admirably chosen, seeing that the work of reform in which Jesus was engaged had a necessary connection with that of John; both would stand and fall together
- They dared not say it was of men, for fear of the people; nor that it was of heaven, because they had disobeyed it
- They therefore say, We cannot tell (Mt 21:27)

# Jesus' Authority Questioned (21:23-27)



- Evidently their difficulty was, how to answer, so as neither to shake their determination to reject the claims of Christ nor damage their reputation with the people
- For the truth itself they cared nothing whatever
- If they acknowledge John as His forerunner, they must, of necessity, receive Jesus as the Christ
- The Lord refuses to answer their question
- Taking advantage of the surprise, silence, and awe produced by this reply, our Lord followed it up immediately by the two following parables

# The Parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32)



- The vineyard is Israel/Judea, the Old Covenant Church
- God is the father
- The first son who at first refused and then later served the father in the vineyard represents the Gentiles, the tax collectors and sinners, the religious outcasts who at first refused to serve God but then answered St. John's call to repentance
- The second son who said "yes" but then did not serve represents the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees who are the failed shepherds of Israel who serve themselves and not God and rejected the gospel and their Messiah
- Therefore Jesus followed by saying, *the publicans, &c. shall go before you into the kingdom of God*

# The Parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32)



- As if He had said,  
“You have avoided a direct answer to my question concerning the baptism of John, and have acknowledged your ignorance; but what do you think of your own conduct in these circumstances? and of all the high professions you make of an extraordinary reverence for God, and zeal in His service? I will plainly tell you my judgment of it, which is very naturally connected with the present subject.”
- Without hesitation, they replied, The first — Not perceiving that by this answer they condemned themselves, till Jesus, making a direct application of the parable, gave them that sharp but just rebuke; Verily I say unto you — Even the most abandoned sinners of the age, such as the publicans and harlots, go into the kingdom of God before you — Are much more open to conviction, and more readily obey the gospel than you

# The Parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32)



- *I go, sir.*—The tone of outward respect, as contrasted with the rude refusal of the elder son, is eminently characteristic as representing the surface religion of the Pharisees
- *For John came unto you,* This gives the reason for Christ's assertion at the end of the last verse
- John came with a special call to the rulers of the people, and they made some show of interest, by sending a deputation to demand his credentials, and by coming to his baptism; but that was all
- They did not alter their lives or change their faulty opinions at his preaching, though they "*were willing for a season to rejoice in his light*" (Jn 5:35)



# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- The second parable is also a rebuke of the ruling classes that were seeking His death
- The situation in the parable would have been a familiar to first century AD Jews
- Landholders often rented out their property to tenant farmers who had to share a percentage of the profits from the harvest with the owner of the land



# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- Jesus uses the parable as a metaphor predicting His death at the hands of the Jewish religious authority and their eventual destruction and loss of authority as God's representatives to His people
- The landowner is here selected to represent God, the Supreme Being
- The vineyard is a symbol of Israel in covenant with God
- *The hedge* - the Divine protection and the blessings He had bestowed and the care He had taken of Israel

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- *The wine-press* - the law and sacrificial rites
- *The tower* - the temple, in which the Divine presence was manifested
- God in His care not only planted Israel, but hedged the nation around by the law which separated it from the Gentiles
- Towers were erected in vineyards for the accommodation of keepers, who defended the vineyards from thieves and from troublesome animals

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- The hedge and wine-press and tower represent the various advantages conferred by God upon the Jewish people
- *The vinedressers* - the priests and teachers of the law
- *Went into a far country* - entrusted the cultivation of the vineyard to the priests, etc., with the utmost confidence; as a man would do who had the most trusty servants, and was obliged to absent himself from home for a certain time
- Notice the repetition of threes in the parable: three times the servants assaulted, three times the master send out messengers

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- The first two times they are servants and the third time the Son
- The "*harvest*" in Scripture represents the gathering of souls in judgment
- *servants* are meant the prophets and other messengers, raised up from time to time
- *Beat one, and killed another*, The language paints the general treatment of the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, being the most obvious instances

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- The language of our Lord in Matthew 23:30, 34, not less than that of Hebrews 11:37, implies that the prophets, as a class, had no light or easy task, and were called upon, one by one, to suffer persecution for the faithful exercise of their office
- According to the obvious design of the whole parable, this is a lively figure for the undutiful and violent reception often given to the prophets or other divine messengers, and the refusal to obey their message
- The intention is to emphasize the number of persons sent prophets; no difference in the treatment



# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- Sending his son was the last and crowning effort of divine mercy; after which, on the one side, all the resources, even of heavenly love, are exhausted; on the other, the measure of sins is perfectly filled up
- Not afterwards merely, but finally, the last step was now to be taken, the mission of the son and heir
- The patient master with no doubts thought they will show respect to his son
- It is assumed that they will have no difficulty in knowing him
- This is the heir, He for whom the inheritance is meant, and to whom it will in due course rightfully arrive



# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- Christ is heir of all things (Heb 1:2)
- If Christ prevailed, Judaism must fall; if they could destroy Christ they could maintain their hold on the vineyard; or, in other words, seize the inheritance
- Such was their hope
- From this text, it appears that the Pharisees and the elders of the Jews knew Jesus to be the Messiah, and that it was only through envy and malice they were so blinded as not to acknowledge Him for the Son of God

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- We can hardly believe that the teachers of the Law were ignorant of it, as Christ had so repeatedly introduced this truth, that He even says Himself they had no excuse, and were only motivated by hatred against Him and His Father
- *and cast him out of the vineyard*, which is not to be understood of their casting him out of the synagogue, which is never said of them
- Nor does it so much relate to the leading of Him without the gates of Jerusalem, where they crucified him, though this is a sense not to be rejected
- But rather, to the delivery of him to those, that were without the vineyard of the Jewish church and nation, to the Gentiles; to be mocked, scourged, and put to death by them

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- For though the sentence of death was pronounced on him by Pilate, an Heathen governor, and was executed by the Roman soldiers; yet it was through the instigation and at the pressing importunity of these vinedressers, the Jewish rulers; and who were afterwards frequently charged by the apostles with the murder of Him
- Since the chief priests and elders did not recognize Jesus as a legitimate prophet of God, they missed the comparison between Jesus' parable of the vineyard and the well-known parable of the vineyard told by prophet Isaiah (Isa 5:1-7)

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- Some of the details of the parables are the same, each describing a well-tended vineyard with a hedge or wall to protect the vineyard from grazing animals, a watchtower to look for thieves, and a wine-press for crushing the grapes to produce wine
- Both parables end in the judgment of Israel, but Jesus also turns this vineyard parable into a prophecy of His Passion and death in verse 38

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- This question is addressed to the Jews, who seem to have been so carried away by the clear description that they answered without seeing that they pronounced their own sentence
- Luke 20:16 tells us, that others among them, (whom we may take to be the Scribes and Pharisees) cried out, *God forbid*; seeing well enough that this was a prediction of their future ruin
- However, it was an unconscious prediction as well
- The nation was nearly destroyed in the Roman war; 1,100,000 perished in the siege of Jerusalem; the Jewish polity was destroyed, and another people, the Church of Christ, mostly Gentile aliens before, received the inheritance and the kingdom



# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- Jesus challenges the chief priests and Pharisees again on their knowledge of the Scriptures
- He has challenged His opponents this way previously (Mt 12:3,5; 21:16) and will do so again (Mt 22:31), which must have made them furious since they saw themselves as the sole proprietors of the deposit of sacred knowledge
- *The stone* is Christ, rejected by the Jewish nation, but the chief corner-stone, for this is what is meant by the head of the corner
- The Scripture that speaks of this stone is Psalm 118:22-23
- The quotation is remarkable as being found in the immediate context of the verse which had supplied the “hosanna” shouts of the multitude on the preceding day



# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- A psalm which the Jews applied to the Messiah
- St. Peter twice applied it to him (Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7)
- The figure represents a stone rejected by the builders as worthless, and then found to be the chief corner-stone of the building
- Christ showed them, that although they had rejected him, yet He should be the chief *corner-stone* to unite the Jews and the Gentiles, converted into one Christian Church
- St. Augustine remarks, that this parable was addressed not only to the opponents of Christ's authority, but likewise to the people

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- *Marvelous* that the rejected stone should become the chief corner-stone, elect and precious, on which the whole structure of the spiritual temple rests (1 Pet 2:6; Isa 28:16)
- *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you*, By this dreadful conclusion He tells them in plain terms, that they shall be forsaken, and punished for their blindness and stubbornness
- The kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to the chosen nation; not any particular nation, but those chosen out of the nations to be a distinctive people (1 Pet 2:9)
- The returns which He expects for His grace are the fruits of grace; nothing can ever be acceptable in the sight of God that does not spring from Himself

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- Two fates are named for opposers in this verse:
  - (1) those who fall on the stone shall be broken
  - (2) those on whom the stone shall fall shall be ground to powder
- While the principle is general, the special application is to the Jewish opposers
- Their falling upon the Stone (Christ) was the ruin of their nation
- When the Stone fell upon them, in the judgment He had predicted because they rejected Him, they were ground to powder in the awful desolation that occurred about thirty-seven years later

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- When the application of the parable was made, they perceived that they were meant and that they had condemned themselves
- *They understood that he spoke of them.* This parable, though immediately addressed to the Jews, contains an admirable instruction for Christians
- The same conduct God observes with regard to particular persons, in punishment of their repeatedly abusing His grace
- When that which should lead to repentance only kindles the flame of malice and revenge, there is but little hope of the salvation of such persons

# The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46)



- The Sanhedrin aimed at two things
  - (1) to seize Jesus quickly, for the Passover (during which no hostile measures could be taken) was close at hand; and because Jesus might be expected to leave Jerusalem after the feast
  - (2) to seize Him apart from the people
- They had nothing to lay to his charge; they therefore send out spies to watch Him, to see if they could catch any thing from Him in discourse, whereof to accuse Him before Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea at this time





# Conclusion

- According to the prophecies quoted by Jesus in verse 5, in what manner will the Messiah come?
- How did Jesus introduce Himself as King of Israel?
- What was the very first thing Jesus did in Jerusalem?
- The selling of animals in the Temple was a service to pilgrims. What was wrong with it? What is the significance of Jesus' quotation from Isaiah 56 as the passage applies to Gentiles?
- In the symbolic images of the Old Testament prophets what does a fruitful fig tree represent? What does an unfruitful fig tree represent?





# Conclusion

- Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?
- What is Jesus' promise about our prayers?
- How does Jesus' quote from Psalm 118:22-23 reveal His true identity?
- Did Jesus speak of Gentiles invited to the Kingdom?
- Since you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, what “robbers” do you think Jesus wants to drive out?



# Conclusion

- Are you more like the first son or like the second one? In what ways?
- What do you do when you disagree with the exercise of authority in the Church? Do you question it, challenge it, or submit to it? How do you see the authority of Jesus in it?