

CROSSROAD



From Praise to Passion

A six week journey for the season of Lent
2022

Week #2

Mark 11:27-12:44; Matthew 21:23-45; 22 & 23:1-36

Luke 20:1-21:4

“By Whose Authority?” -or- “Please Phrase Your Answer in the Form of a Question”

Scripture Stories: Jesus is questioned by the religious authorities. He responds with questions of his own, a parable, and a warning.

Focus Scripture: Mark 12:24 "Your problem is that you don't know the scriptures, and you don't know the power of God."

Overview: In last week's lesson Jesus orchestrates a dramatic entry into Jerusalem, on the back of a colt, and the crowds shout his praises. There's a problem with a fig tree and a problem with the temple. This week we will experience Jesus as he is tested by the religious leaders. Jesus continues to reveal his feelings towards the phony religious people. Try to imagine the emotions flowing back and forth between Jesus and the leaders. By the end of this session, we should have a greater understanding of the tensions in Jerusalem, and Jesus will reveal more of the Kingdom of God.

SOME DEFINITIONS:

PASSOVER LAMB: The Passover Lamb was the center of the meal, the Seder, to commemorate when the Angel of Death passed over Jewish homes, and God freed Israel from Egypt's bondage and slavery. The lamb was to stay with the family for four days before the sacrifice. Exodus 12:3, 5-6 ““On the tenth of this month, they will each take for themselves a lamb for the family, a lamb for the household.[...] ⁵The lamb for you must be a male, without defect, in its first year; you will take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶“You will keep it [in your home] until the fourteenth day of this month, and all the assembly of the community of Israel will slaughter it at twilight.”

HERODIANS: Also referred to as “Hellenists,” a Jewish sect, political, friendly with Rome, and supportive of Herod the Great and of his dynasty.

PHARISEES: a social/religious group at the turn of the century, whose beliefs became the foundational, liturgical, and ritualistic basis for Rabbinic Judaism.

SADDUCEES: a social/political group at the turn of the century, whose beliefs differed from the Pharisees, in that they favored Hellenization, and rejected doctrines such as the Oral Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, and the resurrection of the dead.

CULTURAL AND/OR HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

It's Passover Week, and the Lamb is in the house, getting inspected for defects. Jesus is surrounded by "crowds." We can only speculate the number of people that constituted a crowd. As Jesus is teaching, he is also confronted by the Jewish leaders, Pharisees, Sadducees, and "other leaders." Meanwhile, every Jewish household is bringing a firstborn male lamb to the temple, to be inspected for its purity. Every Jewish household is preparing their home for the Passover, which means destroying (burning) all the leaven, and scouring the house.

Read each section below: *pay attention to the first and last phrases of each encounter. There are three groups: Jesus and his disciples, various Jewish leaders, and the crowds.*

- Take some time to imagine you are there.
- What are your senses experiencing?
- What are the verses telling you about-
 - Who is present, and why?
 - What are they saying, and to whom?
 - What can you glean of their emotions?
- Are there things in the passage that you've not noticed before?
- Are there clues as to Jesus' thoughts and feelings?
- What does each discourse reveal about
 - Jesus' wit and demeanor?
 - Jesus' regard for the leadership?
 - The leaders' mindset, or intentions?
- What do you wonder about?
- If Jesus is the embodiment of God, what do you glean about the nature of God from Jesus' words and actions?

