



THE WEEK THAT CHANGED ETERNITY



FIRST MELISSA



Begin now to pray about friends and neighbors to invite

- Sunday, March 15
- Sunday, March 22
- Wednesday, March 25
- Sunday, March 29
- Wednesday, April 1
- Sunday, April 5



Passion Week includes a multitude of events and trials we might not have chosen for our Savior, but He endured them for us.

This is a week that we need. Without it, we don't have a Savior.



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Passion Week Timeline

Day 1: Palm Sunday

Jesus enters Jerusalem and is welcomed by the crowds waving palm branches.
(Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, and John 12:12-19)



Day 3: Holy Tuesday

Jesus evades ambush, gives Olivet discourse.
(Matthew 21:23-24:51, Mark 11:20-13:37, Luke 20:1-21:36, and John 12:20-38)

Day 5: Maundy Thursday

Last Supper, Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.
(Matthew 26:17-75, Mark 14:12-72, Luke 22:7-62, and John 13:1-38)

Day 7: Black Saturday

Jesus' body lays in the tomb and is treated for burial; disciples come out of hiding and mourn openly.
(Matthew 27:62-66, Mark 16:1, Luke 23:56, and John 19:40)

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

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Day 2: Holy Monday

Jesus curses the fruitless fig tree, enters the temple and clears out the corrupted money changers.
(Matthew 21:12-22, Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-48, and John 2:13-17)

Day 4: Spy Wednesday

Jesus and disciples rest in Bethany. Judas agrees to betray Jesus.
(Matthew 26:12-14, Mark 14:10-12, Luke 22:3-6)

Day 6: Good Friday

Jesus is put on trial and crucified, then taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb.
(Matthew 27:1-62, Mark 15:1-47, Luke 22:63-23:56, and John 18:28-19:37)

Day 8: Resurrection Day

Multiple eyewitness accounts of Jesus having resurrected and the discovery of empty tomb.
(Matthew 28:1-13, Mark 16:1-14, Luke 24:1-49, and John 20:1-23)

Last Week of Jesus' Life

**Palm
Sunday**

**Resurrection
Sunday**

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

Jesus' Triumphant Entry

Judas Plans His Betrayal of Jesus

Judas Betrays Jesus

Jesus' Physical Body Dies

Jesus Is In The Grave

Jesus Returns To Life

Day
6 am - 6 pm

Night
6 pm - 6 am

**On the
cross**

Died

**Returned
To Life**

Nisan 10

Nisan 11

Nisan 12

Nisan 13

Nisan 14

Nisan 15

Nisan 16

Nisan 17

Passover

**Last
Supper**

**Days begin at SUNDOWN
on the Hebrew calendar**



- The Bible has four books dedicated to describing Jesus' earthly life and ministry. What's amazing is how much the Gospels focus on Jesus' final week before the Cross.
- The breakdown according to each of the Gospels:
 - A third of Matthew, from Matthew 21-28
 - A third of Mark, from Mark 11-16
 - A quarter of Luke, from Luke 19-24
 - Nearly half of John, from John 12-20
- The Gospel of John is the most concentrated upon the last week of Jesus. Nearly a third of John's Gospel is dedicated to one day, from John 13-19.
- There are a **total of 89 chapters** from all four Gospels. Of those chapters, **29 focus on the final week**. These chapters comprise one-third of the Gospels.
- Andy Naselli said, "The Gospels are essentially passion narratives with extended introductions."



Who are our sources?

- **Matthew** – called Levi, Jewish tax-collector who worked in Capernaum, Jesus told him “Follow Me”, one of The Twelve
- **Mark** – John Mark, cousin of Barnabas, not one of The Twelve, interviewed Simon Peter for information for his gospel
- **Luke** – Gentile physician, probably led to faith by Apostle Paul, not one of The Twelve
- **John** – brother of James, influenced by John the Baptist, one of The Twelve, wrote books of 1, 2, 3 John and Revelation



Day & Location
Palm Sunday in
Jerusalem

Event

Triumphant entry into
Jerusalem on donkey colt

Scripture Reference

Matthew 21:1-11

Mark 11:1-11

Luke 19:28-44

John 12:12-19

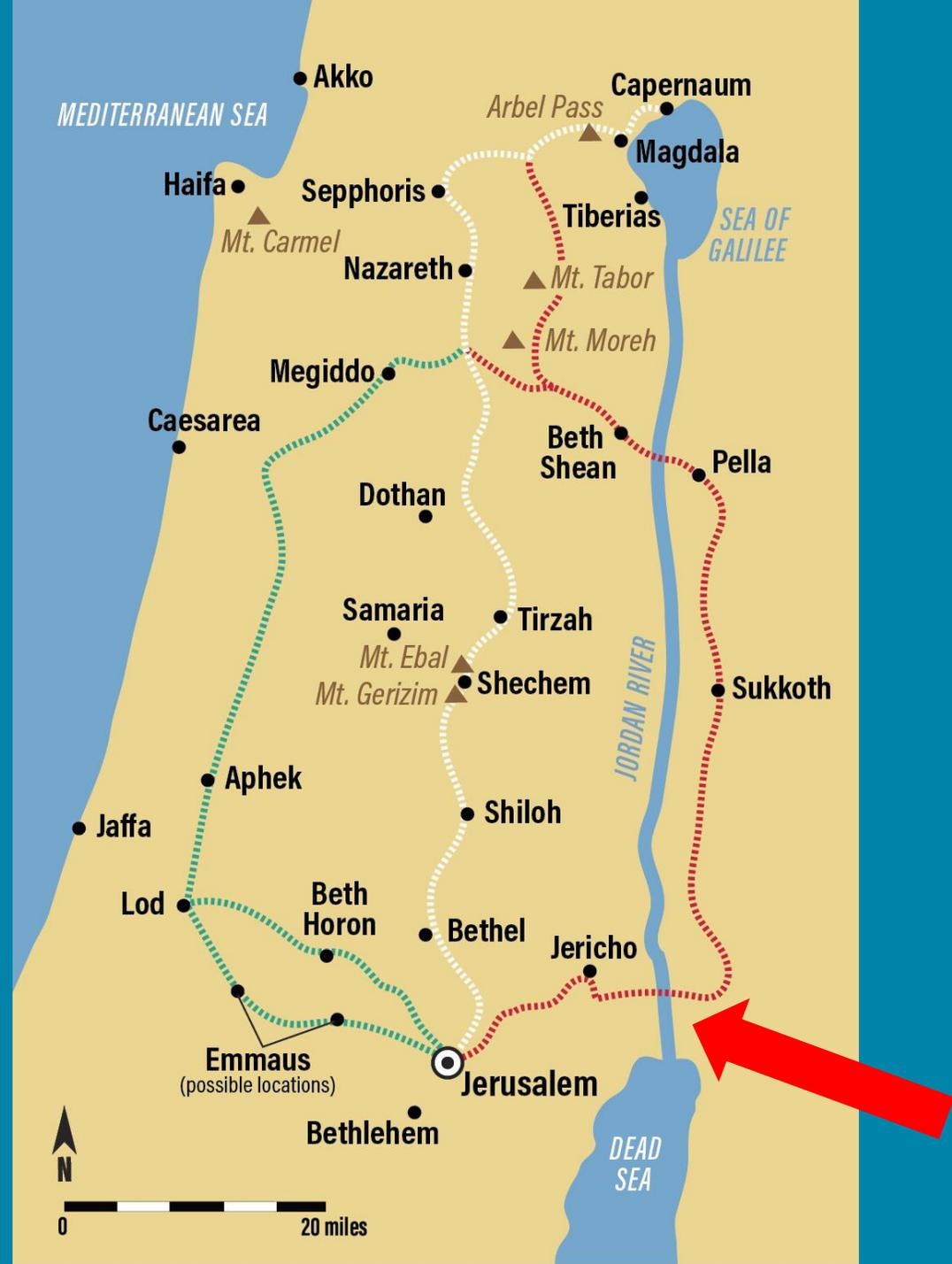


When they [Jesus and His 12 disciples] had approached Jerusalem [to celebrate Passover] and had come to Bethphage, at the [peak of the] Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.” Matthew 21:1-3



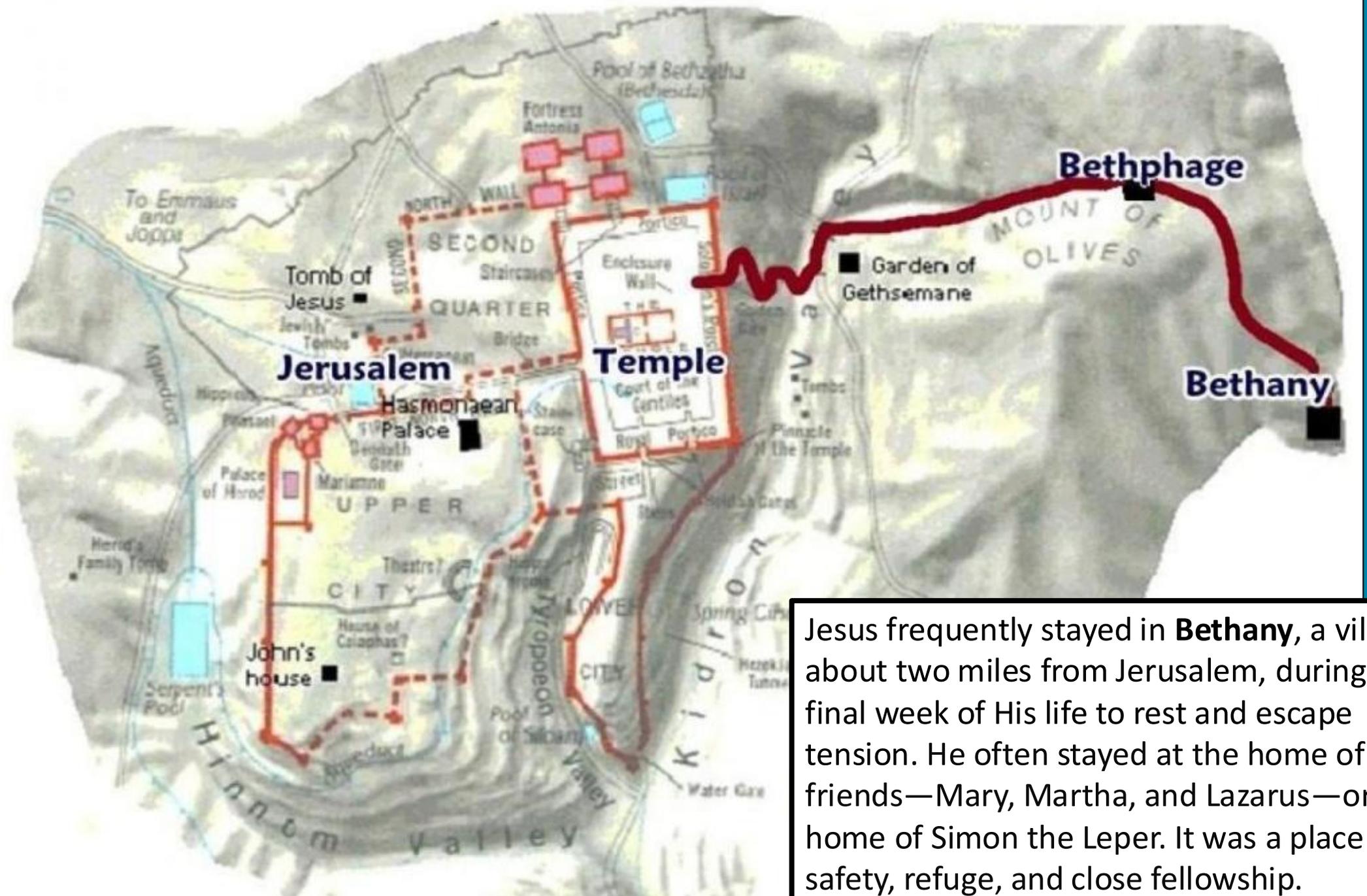
To celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and the Feast of Booths (Sukkot), Jews traveled to the Jerusalem Temple during the first century AD. This was sometimes a long journey. For those living in Galilee, it could take up to a week to travel 80-90 miles.

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/new-testament/3-pilgrimage-paths-from-galilee-to-jerusalem/>





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Jesus frequently stayed in **Bethany**, a village about two miles from Jerusalem, during the final week of His life to rest and escape tension. He often stayed at the home of His friends—Mary, Martha, and Lazarus—or at the home of Simon the Leper. It was a place of safety, refuge, and close fellowship.



This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet (Zechariah 9:9 which was written about 500 BC): “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the [male] foal of a beast of burden.’ ” The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He [Jesus] sat on the coats. Matthew 21:4-7



Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

Six prophecies fulfilled at Jesus' arrival

Zechariah 9:9a	Greeted with rejoicing in Jerusalem	Matthew 21:8-10
Zechariah 9:9b	Beheld as King	John 12:12-13
Zechariah 9:9c	The Messiah would be just	John 5:30
Zechariah 9:9d	The Messiah would bring salvation	Luke 19:10
Zechariah 9:9e	The Messiah would be humble	Matthew 11:29
Zechariah 9:9f	Presented to Jerusalem riding on a donkey	Matthew 21:6-9



Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting **branches from the** [date palm] **trees** and spreading them in the road.

Matthew 21:8



Branches from date palm trees



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God's Word is correct and exact

Jesus riding into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday is the only recorded instance in all of the Gospels that Jesus rode on anything. Every other time Jesus traveled, it was by foot.

The significance of this lies in the fact that Zechariah prophesied this exact thing hundreds of years earlier. We see Jesus intentionally and deliberately fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy from Zechariah 9:9. - Chris Gabriel



The [large] crowds [in Jerusalem for the Passover holiday] going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, “**Hosanna** to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; **Hosanna** in the highest!” Matthew 21:9

* Jesus’ public entrance into Jerusalem (on the day now known as Palm Sunday) was recorded in Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, and John 12.



Hosanna (Greek ὡσαννά) is an English word from the Hebrew expression meaning “Save us, we pray.”

O Lord, **do save, we beseech You**; O Lord, we beseech You, do send prosperity! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord; we have blessed you from the house of the Lord.

Psalm 118:25-26

*Psalm 118:25 was recited once daily for six days in the liturgy of the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) but seven times on the seventh day as branches were waved. The Psalm became associated with messianic expectations.

- Harper's Bible Dictionary

Mount of Olives





The Palm Sunday road as it looks today





When He [Jesus] had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, “Who is this?” And the crowds [of Jews attending Passover] were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.” Matthew 21:10-11

*In the 1st Century AND in the 21st Century, some people believe in Jesus as Messiah, some are curious about Jesus, and some have never even heard about Jesus.



Eastern Gate

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For Christians, the East Gate is where Jesus made His Triumphant Entry ([John 12:12-15](#)). It is likely also the gate He exited through to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane the night of His arrest ([Matthew 26:30](#) , [36](#)), and the one He passed through 40 days after His resurrection when the disciples accompanied Him to the Mount of Olives before His last ascension into Heaven ([Acts 1:9-12](#)).

<http://www.stepsoffaith.com/apologetics/history-prophecy-triumphant-entry-gate>





Jesus Enters Jerusalem

- A king riding into the city on a horse generally communicated war, but when a king rode in on a donkey, that signified peace. The people of Jerusalem could see the story unfolding, but Jesus was communicating that He was a different kind of king, a different kind of Savior. He is the Prince of Peace. - Chris Gabriel
- Unfortunately, the celebration was not to last. The crowds looked for a Messiah who would rescue them *politically* and free them *nationally*, but Jesus had come to save them *spiritually*. Mankind's primary need is spiritual, not political, cultural, or national salvation. - www.gotquestions.org/Palm-Sunday.html



On the next day the large crowd who had come to the [Passover] feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, **took the branches of the palm trees** and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.”
John 12:12-13



Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written [Zechariah 9:9], “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.” These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him. So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.”
John 12:14-19



As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ you say, ‘The Lord has need of it’; and immediately he will send it back here.” They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they untied it. Some of the bystanders were saying to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission. They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it. And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!” Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late. Mark 11:1-11



After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of it.’ ” So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” They said, “The Lord has need of it.” They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. **As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen**, shouting: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” But **Jesus answered, “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!”** Luke 19:28-40



When He [Jesus] approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” Luke 19:41-44

* It is a tragic thing to see the Savior but not recognize Him for who He is.



By riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus announced that He was the King of Israel. This was the way King David and King Solomon had ridden into Jerusalem (2 Samuel 16:2; 1 Kings 1:38–40). They each rode a donkey into Jerusalem to show that they were humble kings who desired to serve the people with love and wisdom. Jesus proclaimed that He would rule on the throne of His father, King David. He will rule on the earth as its King when He returns. Right now, He rules from heaven. On Palm Sunday, don't miss Jesus' true identity. He is Lord, Savior, and King. Because He was willing to die for our sins, His death made possible our forgiveness. His resurrection proves that our forgiveness gives us eternal life. When we receive Him, He becomes Lord, Savior, and King of our lives.

- Daniel S. Steffen



Palm Sunday reminds us that the reign of Christ is far greater than any the mind of man could ever conceive or plan. Man looked for someone to fight their battles in the present-day world. Yet God had the ultimate plan of sending His Son to fight the final battle over death. This is the greatness of why we celebrate this week. Because of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, we can be set free of death. - Debbie McDaniel

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies" John 11:25



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Day & Location

Monday in Jerusalem

Event

Cleansing the Temple

Scripture Reference

Matthew 21:12-17

Mark 11:15-19

Luke 19:45-48



The Bible records **two instances** of Jesus cleansing the temple of money changers and those selling sacrificial animals. Jesus' first encounter with money changers was at the beginning of His three-year ministry (John 2:14–16). He made a whip of cords and drove them out.

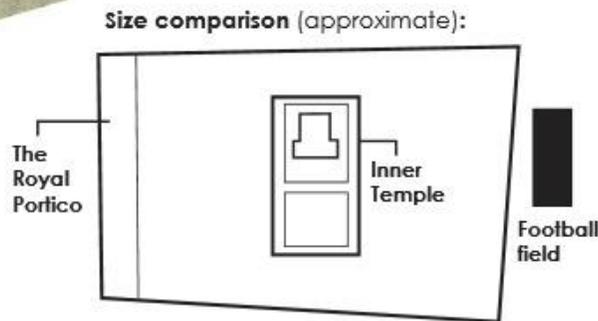
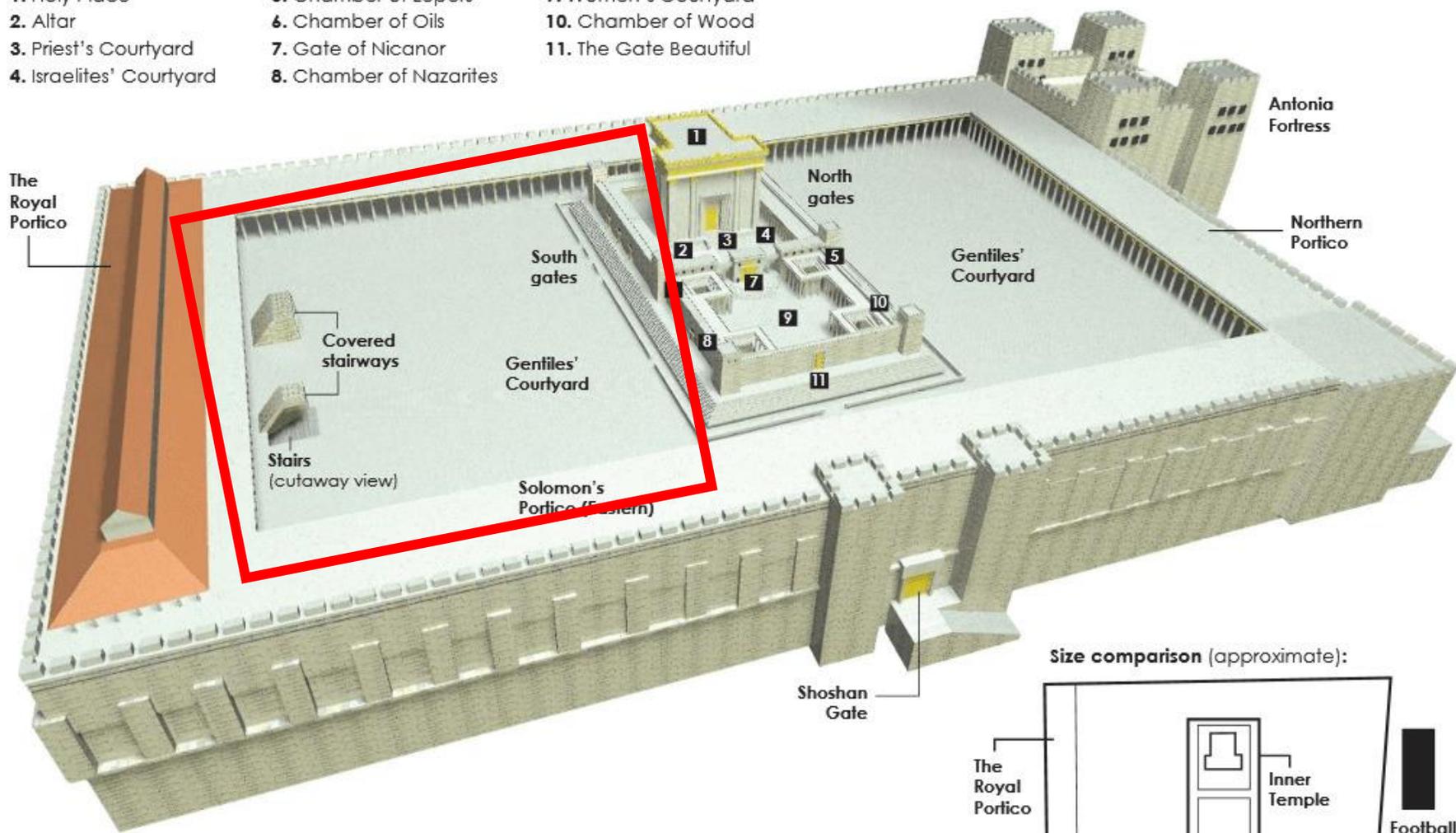
The second time He confronted the money changers was the week before His trial and crucifixion. Seeing that the money changers had come back, He again drove them out, saying, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers’” (Matthew 21:13).



Herod's "Second" Temple on the Temple Mount

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple expansion, including the massive Temple Mount, was not completed until approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

- 1. Holy Place
- 2. Altar
- 3. Priest's Courtyard
- 4. Israelites' Courtyard
- 5. Chamber of Lepers
- 6. Chamber of Oils
- 7. Gate of Nicanor
- 8. Chamber of Nazarites
- 9. Women's Courtyard
- 10. Chamber of Wood
- 11. The Gate Beautiful

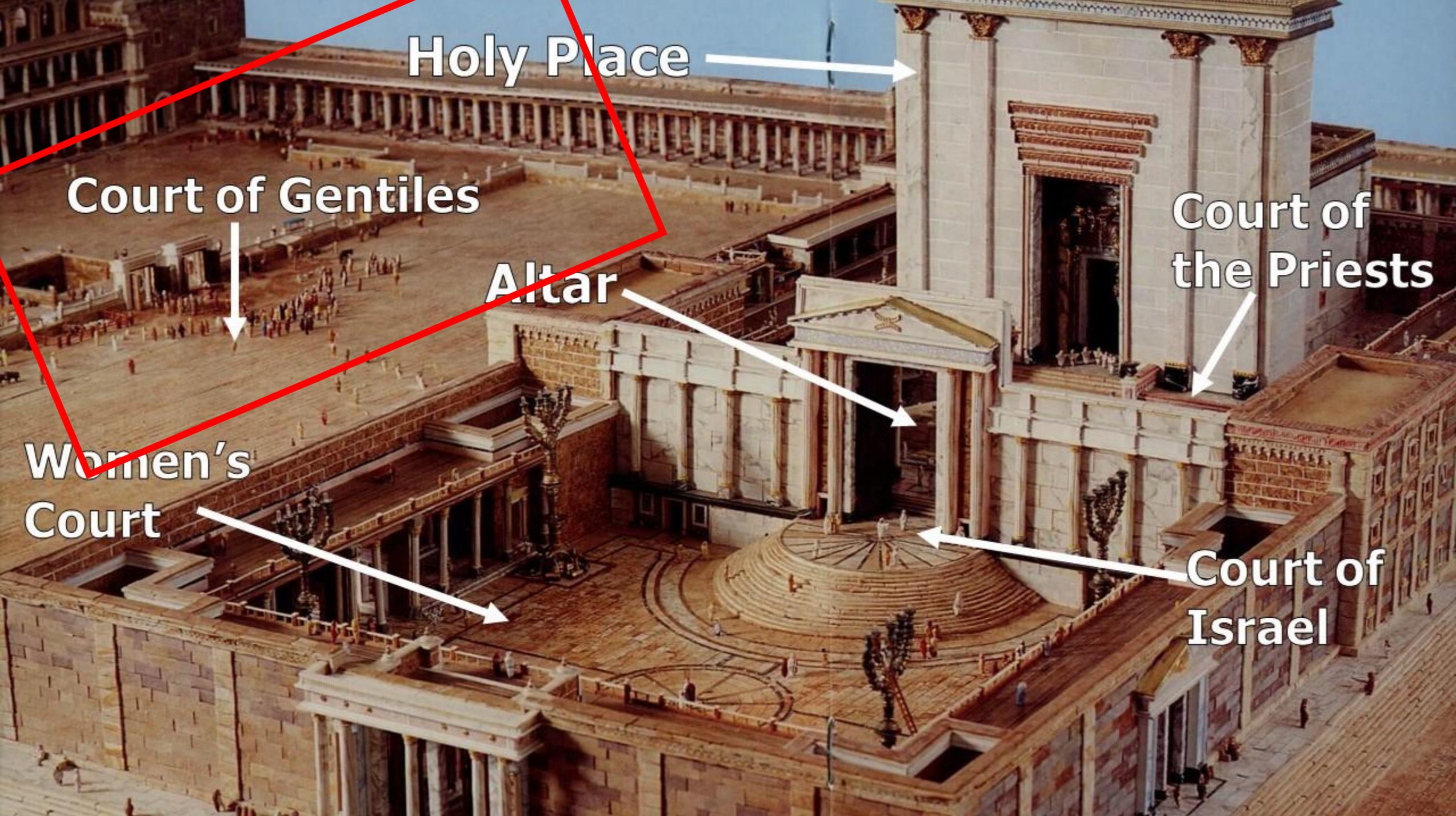


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The temple's layout included several critical areas, with the Court of the Gentiles being particularly notable. This outermost court was the only place within the temple precincts where non-Jews were permitted to pray, serving as a designated area for all nations to connect with God. However, by Jesus' time, this area had become crowded with merchants and money changers, which disrupted its intended purpose as a place of prayer and meditation.

<https://chasingthewind.net/2024/04/14/cleansing-of-the-temple/>

THE WEEK THAT CHANGED ETERNITY



Holy Place



Court of Gentiles



Altar



Court of the Priests



Women's Court



Court of Israel





And Jesus entered the temple [on Monday] and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, “It is written [Isaiah 56:7, Jeremiah 7:11], ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a robbers’ den.” Matthew 21:12-13



And the blind and the lame came to Him [Jesus] in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became indignant and said to Him, “Do You hear what these children are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read [Psalm 8:2], ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself’?” And He left them and went out of the city [of Jerusalem] to Bethany [a walk of about 2 miles / 40 minutes], and spent the [Sunday] night there. Matthew 21:14-17



Then they came to Jerusalem [on Monday]. And He [Jesus] entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. And He began to teach and say to them, “Is it not written [Isaiah 56:7, Jeremiah 7:11], ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a robbers’ den.” The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching. When [Monday] evening came, they would go out of the city. Mark 11:15-19



Because Jewish law required a temple tax of a half-shekel (Exodus 30:11–16), Jews and visitors from other nations came to pay their taxes when they offered their sacrifices. But foreign coins with the likeness of pagan emperors would not be accepted in God’s temple. So money changers exchanged those foreign coins for Jewish money, but they did so at an exorbitant profit. Rather than provide this service as a business in another part of town, they exploited the religious zeal of the visitors to Jerusalem and did their business on temple grounds. Because they determined their own exchange rate, money changers easily took advantage of the poor and the foreigners pouring into Jerusalem for Passover.

These same money changers were associated with others who engaged in shady business practices in the temple courts. Some sold sacrificial animals, overcharging people who did not bring their own. Others were in charge of examining the animals to be sacrificed, and it was a simple matter to declare an animal “unapproved” and force the worshiper to buy another animal—at an inflated price—from the temple vendors. Such goings-on, exploiting the poor and the foreigner, angered the Lord Jesus and was strictly forbidden in the Torah (Exodus 22:21; Leviticus 19:34).



Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, saying to them, “It is written [Isaiah 56:7, Jeremiah 7:11], ‘And My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a robbers’ den. And He [Jesus] was teaching daily in the temple [in Jerusalem]; but **the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him**, and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.” Luke 19:45-48



When Jesus overturned the tables in the temple, He was not having a moment of uncontrolled anger. This was not impulsive rage or a loss of composure. It was a deliberate, prophetic act, measured, purposeful, and rooted in deep covenant concern. The temple was meant to be the place where heaven and earth met. It was where Israel came to pray, to repent, and to draw near to God. Yet by the time Jesus arrived, parts of the temple, especially the Court of the Gentiles, had become a marketplace. What was supposed to be a space of prayer had been crowded out by profit, convenience, and religious business.

Jesus' words explain His actions, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers." He was not condemning commerce itself, but the exploitation wrapped in religion. The poor were being burdened, worship was being obstructed, and access to God was being treated as a transaction. This moment echoes the prophets.

Like Jeremiah and Malachi before Him, Jesus confronts a system that preserves religious form while hollowing out its heart. The tables were overturned because something sacred had been inverted long before, worship had been rearranged around human benefit instead of God's holiness and mercy.

What is striking is that Jesus did not abandon the temple, instead, He cleansed it. His anger was restorative, not destructive. He was not rejecting worship, He was reclaiming it. And by doing so, He revealed something deeper, the problem was never the temple alone, but the human heart that uses holy things without reverence.

Soon after this event, the Gospel revealed a greater truth. Jesus Himself became the true temple, the place where God and humanity meet fully and finally. The cleansing of the physical temple points forward to the cleansing He would accomplish through the cross, not by driving people away, but by drawing sinners near through grace.

In overturning the tables, Jesus showed us that God cares deeply about how He is approached, not because He is fragile, but because He is faithful. He desires worship that is honest, accessible, and centered on Him.

And in Christ, that access is no longer guarded by courts or coins, but opened by mercy. The tables fell so that worship could stand again, this time, grounded not in profit, but in truth.

If Christ will visit your heart today, will there be tables He will need to overturn? If so, will you be willing to let Him overturn those tables and cleanse your heart? - Undaunted Disciple



Day & Location

Monday in Jerusalem

Event

Cursed the Fig Tree

Scripture Reference

Matthew 21:18-22

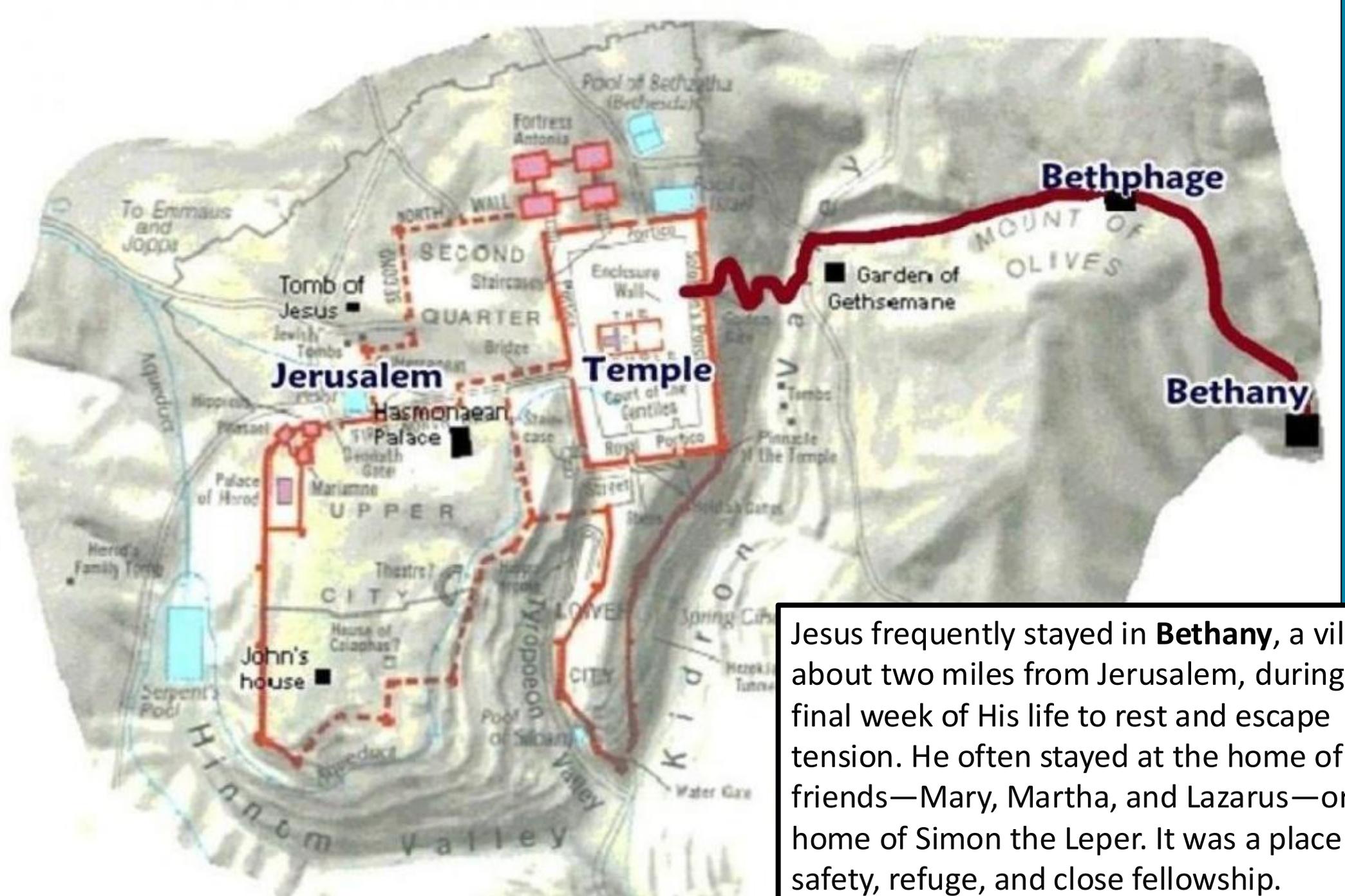
Mark 11:12-14, 20-25



Now in the morning [Monday], when He [Jesus] was returning to the city [of Jerusalem, from Bethany], He became hungry. Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it [fig tree], “No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.” **And at once the fig tree withered.** Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, “How did the fig tree wither all at once?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen. And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” Matthew 21:18-22



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Jesus frequently stayed in **Bethany**, a village about two miles from Jerusalem, during the final week of His life to rest and escape tension. He often stayed at the home of His friends—Mary, Martha, and Lazarus—or at the home of Simon the Leper. It was a place of safety, refuge, and close fellowship.



On the next day [after His triumphant entry... Monday], when they had left Bethany, He [Jesus] became hungry. Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs [first crop ripens in June/July]. He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!” And His disciples were listening. Mark 11:12-14



As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. Being reminded, Peter said to Him, “Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.” And Jesus answered saying to them, “Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you. Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.” Mark 11:20-25



Why did Jesus curse the fig tree if it was not the right season for figs? The answer to this question can be determined by studying the characteristics of fig trees. The fruit of the fig tree generally appears before the leaves, and, because the fruit is green it blends in with the leaves right up until it is almost ripe. Therefore, when Jesus and His disciples saw from a distance that the tree had leaves, they would have expected it to also have fruit on it even though it was earlier in the season than what would be normal for a fig tree to be bearing fruit. Also, each tree would often produce two to three crops of figs each season. There would be an early crop in the spring followed by one or two later crops. In some parts of Israel, depending on climate and conditions, it was also possible that a tree might produce fruit ten out of twelve months. This also explains why Jesus and His disciples would be looking for fruit on the fig tree even if it was not in the main growing season. The fact that the tree already had leaves on it even though it was at a higher elevation around Jerusalem, and therefore would have been outside the normal season for figs, would have seemed to be a good indication that there would also be fruit on it.



As to the significance of this passage and what it means, the answer to that is again found in the chronological setting and in understanding how a fig tree is often used symbolically to represent Israel in the Scriptures. First of all, chronologically, Jesus had just arrived at Jerusalem amid great fanfare and great expectations, but then proceeds to cleanse the Temple and curse the barren fig tree. Both had significance as to the spiritual condition of Israel. With His cleansing of the Temple and His criticism of the worship that was going on there (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17), Jesus was effectively denouncing Israel's worship of God. With the cursing of the fig tree, He was symbolically denouncing Israel as a nation and, in a sense, even denouncing unfruitful "Christians" (that is, people who profess to be Christian but have no evidence of a relationship with Christ).

The presence of a fruitful fig tree was considered to be a symbol of blessing and prosperity for the nation of Israel. Likewise, the absence or death of a fig tree would symbolize judgment and rejection. Symbolically, the fig tree represented the spiritual deadness of some people in Israel, who while very religious outwardly with all the sacrifices and ceremonies, were spiritually barren because of their sins. By cleansing the Temple and cursing the fig tree, causing it to wither and die, Jesus was pronouncing His coming judgment and demonstrating His power to carry it out. It also teaches the principle that religious profession and observance are not enough to guarantee salvation, unless there is the fruit of genuine salvation evidenced in the life of the person. James would later echo this truth when he wrote that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). The lesson of the fig tree is that we should bear spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-23), not just give an appearance of religiosity. God judges fruitlessness and expects that those who have a relationship with Him will "bear much fruit" (John 15:5-8).



On His way to Jerusalem, Jesus approaches a fig tree full of leaves, hoping to find fruit. Mark was careful to note that it was not the season for figs. When no fruit is found though, Jesus speaks a word of judgment over the tree. The next day, the disciples saw that it has withered from the roots.

In the ancient world, fig trees often bore early fruit before the full harvest. Leaves often signal that something edible is now present. But the tree in this account looked alive and promising, but was found to be without any fruit. The fig tree stands as a living picture of outward appearance without inward reality.

In Mark's Gospel, the fig tree scene is intentionally placed around Jesus' cleansing of the temple. Israel's worship system was busy, active, and impressive, but Jesus finds it hollow. There was so much religious activity going on but no fruit of repentance, justice, or faithfulness.

The curse, then, is not impulsive anger. It is prophetic action. Like the prophets before Him, Jesus used a visible sign to reveal a spiritual truth, a life that appears healthy but bears no fruit is already in danger of judgment.

The tree did not die because it failed accidentally. It died because it was never fulfilling its purpose. To clarify, Jesus is not condemning weakness, struggle, or seasons of waiting. He was confronting pretense. The fig tree did not look barren. It looked full and that is the warning. Spiritual barrenness is most dangerous when it is hidden beneath leaves.

When the disciples notice the withered tree, Jesus turned the moment toward teaching about faith, prayer, and forgiveness. So the goal was not fear, but awakening. Judgment was shown, but so is the way forward, trust in God, dependence, and hearts aligned with Him.

If we read carefully, this story was not pushing us away from Christ. It draws us closer, it invites us to examine not how visible our faith in Him is right now, but whether it is alive at the roots. And quietly, in the background, the cross is already approaching. The One who spoke judgment on the tree would soon bear judgment Himself, so that barren hearts might yet be made fruitful.

- Undaunted Disciple



What is coming next?

Passion Week Timeline

Day 1: Palm Sunday

Jesus enters Jerusalem and is welcomed by the crowds waving palm branches.
(Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, and John 12:12-19)

Day 3: Holy Tuesday

Jesus evades ambush, gives Olivet discourse.
(Matthew 21:23-24:51, Mark 11:20-13:37, Luke 20:1-21:36, and John 12:20-38)

Day 5: Maundy Thursday

Last Supper, Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.
(Matthew 26:17-75, Mark 14:12-72, Luke 22:7-62, and John 13:1-38)

Day 7: Black Saturday

Jesus' body lays in the tomb and is treated for burial; disciples come out of hiding and mourn openly.
(Matthew 27:62-66, Mark 16:1, Luke 23:56, and John 19:40)

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Day 2: Holy Monday

Jesus curses the fruitless fig tree, enters the temple and clears out the corrupted money changers.
(Matthew 21:12-22, Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-48, and John 2:13-17)

Day 4: Spy Wednesday

Jesus and disciples rest in Bethany. Judas agrees to betray Jesus.
(Matthew 26:12-14, Mark 14:10-12, Luke 22:3-6)

Day 6: Good Friday

Jesus is put on trial and crucified, then taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb.
(Matthew 27:1-62, Mark 15:1-47, Luke 22:63-23:56, and John 18:28-19:37)

Day 8: Resurrection Day

Multiple eyewitness accounts of Jesus having resurrected and the discovery of empty tomb.
(Matthew 28:1-13, Mark 16:1-14, Luke 24:1-49, and John 20:1-23)



What is coming next?

- An exceedingly busy week for the Savior demonstrated His strength and compassion, His power and humility.
- The Messiah who was cheered and adored by the crowds on Palm Sunday will soon be ridiculed and rejected.
- Some who believed in Him will have their faith tested.
- Some who dismissed Him will have their hearts changed.
- This week is the time to decide... **Who is Jesus to me?**