

Intro.

- A. Homeland Security has long been something we have taken for granted (to a gt. extent), but not anymore.
1. All of my life I have seen Nat. Grd. assist w/ crowd control at huge gatherings, disaster relief, etc.
 2. Today we use a Color System (R=*severe risk*, O=*high*, Y=*Elevated*, B=*Guarded* \ *General*, G=*Low Risk*)
 3. Criteria for rating: credible info.; info. corroborated; specific threat; potentially grave consequences.
- B. By our standards today, Jerusalem was on **Yellow Alert** during Passover season,
1. Passover = delight to Jews & despair to Romans.
 - a. 1,000's of devout Jews f/ all over the world flocked w/ nationalistic fervor to their capitol city.
 - b. Jeru's population more than tripled during the feast, so the military was on special alert.
 2. Soldiers recogn. potential for an enthusiastic Jewish Zealot to incite a riot, or kill a Rm. soldier, or at least periodic disputes which occasionally erupted between Jewish factions (Pharisees, Sadducees...)
 3. In this setting Servant of God comes into Jeru. in His final week, serving in 3 different official roles.

Discuss.**I. THE SERVANT – KING. Mk. 11:1-11**

- A. For the 1st time, Jesus prepares His disciples to give a public demonstration in His honor.
1. 2 sent to Bethphage to get a particular donkey for His use.
 2. (c **Zech. 9:9**) – This prophetic fulfillment accomplished two things:
 - a. He declared Himself to be the Messiah.
 - b. This set into motion the events that would lead to his attest, trial & crucifixion ... at Passover.
- B. Galilean Jews were especially enthusiastic to join the procession proclaiming Christ as King.
1. Most likely, the Jews who in just a few hours would cry out *Crucify Him* were those f/ Judea & Jer.
 2. Jews f/ Galilee seemed more sympathetic to Jesus & His ministry. **Ps. 118:25-26**
 3. These gladly paved the road with their garments & festive branches, saying *Hosanna = Save now.* \ \
- C. Roman soldiers probably sneered at this Jewish celebration as it paled in comparison w/ *Roman triumph*.
1. Roman general had to kill at least 5,000 enemy soldiers to merit a Triumph.
 2. Interestingly, the Gospel would “conquer” over 5000 Jews in just a few weeks (c. **Ac. 4:4**).

II. THE SERVANT-JUDGE. Mk. 11:12-26

* Jesus came as Savior, which involved being a servant, king, judge... & he now deals w/ Israel sad sp. condi

- A. **Cursing the fig tree.** (vs. 12-14, 20-26) -- *one of two miracles (demons into swine) destroyed part of nature.*
1. Leaves usually appeared in Mar./Apr., fruit forms in June, another crop in Aug., sometimes 3rd in Dec.
 - a. Leaves could indicate fruit “left-over” or just forming, but neither was the case here.
 - b. Used this occasion to teach 2 important lessons:
 2. **Lesson on failure** – (vs. 12-14) Israel wasn't fruitful, & God's longsuffering was coming to an end.
 - a. Earlier (**Lk. 13:1-9**) Jesus used a barren fig tree to teach re: God's patience, allowing time for growth
 - b. *Lesson for us = God still expects us to be fruitful, & it is sinful not to do our part to produce, Jn. 15:7f*
 - c. Need to make sure of our sp. health & that we do not just *appear* to be doing right (**Col. 2:6f**)
 3. **Lesson on faith** – (vs. 20-26) -- Constantly trust God, living w/ an attitude of dependence on Him.
 - a. This lesson had as its target the effectiveness of prayer, & the connection of faith in God.
 - b. Other aspects of effective prayer include *prayer that is according to God's will, I Jn. 5:14f*
 - c. To be powerful, the one praying *must be abiding in God's love (i.e., obedient, Jn. 15:7-14).*
 - d. It's a mistake to think this means —→ *God is obligated to answer my prayer, no matter what I ask.*
- B. **Cleansing the temple,** the 2nd time around (c. **Jn. 2:13-22**). **Vs. 15-19.**
1. Tables of moneychangers -- in court of the Gentiles, which should have been a place for praying, **Is.56:7**
 2. Instead, this area had become a place for preying on the worshippers.
 3. Operators rationalized they simply offered valuable service, since exchange rates = unstable, & a sacrifice brought f/ home by foreign Jews might have become sick or injured on their journey.
 4. Doves were a sacrifice for the poor (c. **Lev. 14:22**)
 5. *Den of thieves* (c. **Jer. 7:11**), i.e., a hiding place of robbers!!!
 6. Both Isa. & Jer. warned Jews that presence of the temple \leq guarantee of blessings f/ God.

III. THE SERVANT-PROPHET. **Mk. 11:27--12:44** (in His final days of teaching & entrapment)

- A. 1st, there was a question re: His authority, (**11:27-12:12**)
1. The Sanhedrin was obligated to question those claiming to be sent by God, c. **Deut. 18:15-22**
 - a. Prob. was their motive: not seeking truth, but reason to destroy Jesus (c. **11:18**)
 - b. Knowing their hearts & their plot, he challenged them w/ a “?” that left them in a dilemma.
 2. **Was the baptism of John f/ heaven or of men???**
 - a. If say f/ heaven, then why hadn't they obeyed it?
 - b. If say f/ men, have a serious problem w/ the people who knew John to be a prophet!
 3. He drove home the lesson of their guilt in the parable about the vineyard owner whose messengers & son were killed by the very ones who leased His vineyard.
 - a. According to **Lev. 19:23ff**, farmer would not use fruit until 5th yr.
 - b. To retain legal rights, the owner had to receive produce f/ property, at least on a small scale.
 - c. *What should the lord of the vineyard do?* (**Mt. 21:41** – their answer, *destroy wicked men...*)
 - d. The real lesson: Rejection of Jesus by Jews; God favor would be upon sp. Israel, not phys. Israel.
 - e. *Rejected stone* was f/ **Psa. 118:22f**, = *chief cornerstone* = Christ (**Ac. 4:11-12**)
- B. 2nd, there was a question of responsibility, (**12:13-17**) ?*Give tribute to Caesar?*
1. Pharisees & Herodians were strange allies (usually enemies), but united to destroy Christ.
 2. Answer was simple: *Give to Caesar what is his, & to God what is His.*
- C. 3rd question was -- eternity raised by Sadducees (believe only in 1st 5 books O.T., aristocrats) **vs.18-27**
1. *What if...7 husbands. Whose wife will she be after the resurrection?* (c. **Deut. 25:5-6**)
 2. Response: *You err, not knowing...Ex. 3!!! _God IS the God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob...*
 3. As angels = without gender (no male & female)
 4. Mistakes of Sadducees Jesus exposed: *They denied resurrection, angels, or resurrected spirits.*
- D. 4th question came f/ scribes: *Which is the greatest commandment???* **vs. 28-34**
1. Would He answer *sacrifices, ...wearing phylacteries, ...laws of purification, ...keeping feasts?* (613 laws).
 2. Jesus answered f/ **Deut. 6:4-5 & Lev. 19:18**
 3. The answer given demanded the scribe give appropriate respect to this perfect answer. He was sincere!!!

Concl.

E. Jesus will now ask “?” *How is Christ the son of David, & yet David calls Him Lord???* **12:28-34**

1. Whose son is Jesus, the Christ = the most significant question asked in this series.
 - a. Jews believed Messiah would be David's son, **Jn. 7:41-42 (c. Psa. 110:1)**
 - b. Only way David's son could also be David's Lord = when the Messiah would come.
 2. Notice: *the common people heard Him gladly!!!*
- F. Text closes with a 2-fold warning: **vs. 38-44**
1. Warning vs pride of the scribes, loved social recognition, position, but they were materialistic frauds who stole widow's money
 2. Warning against pride of the (“artificially”) rich, impt. because of clothes, possessions, social position.
 - a. 13 treasury coffers w/ trumpet-shaped receptacles for donations set around the walls of ct. of women
 - b. Rich made big production of their giving, but Jesus gave recognition to proportion, not the portion.

Invitation:

- A. We all would do well to avoid the sins of pride (whether in living or of giving).
- B. Pride seems to be at the very heart of all sin.
- C. That is why one has to put away selfish & foolish pride, humbly submit in obedience to God. **Mt. 16:24**