

Reading Tracks

TRACK ONE

Follow along with basics of the story in a short selection of readings this week..

Monday: Mark 11:12-24

Tuesday: Matthew 21:12-22

Wednesday: Luke 19:45-48

Thursday: John 2:13-25

Friday: Isaiah 56:1-8

Saturday: Jeremiah 7:1-11

TRACK TWO

Get a little bigger perspective by reading assigned sections from *The Story* © 2011 by Zondervan.

Read page 364 this week.

TRACK THREE

Get the whole story by reading through most of the Bible in longer sections.

In your Bible, read John 10-13 this week.

This Week's Scripture Memory Verse

"Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." Mark 11:17 (NIV)

Next Week in Worship

Next Weeks' Message: "Palms to the Passion"

Next Week's Reading: Luke 19:28-44

In this week's message we learned about Jesus' shocking actions in the ancient Jerusalem Temple. When *The Big God Story* continues next week, we'll pull back to see his famous arrival in Jerusalem and the road he walked to the cross for us.



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Group Discussion

Connect

This week's Bible readings include stories of Jesus in the ancient Jerusalem temple, which he had even visited as a boy. Is there a place where you can recall connecting with God somehow at an early time in your life?

Learn

Read Mark 11:12-25. After entering Jerusalem, Jesus visited the Temple and performed actions that shocked everyone.

- What would you think if this happened in the place where you worship?
- Mark tells the story of this temple action sandwiched between a story about a tree cursed for its fruitlessness. This is a technique that Mark has used elsewhere to interpret one story through another. How do you think this is supposed to help us understand Jesus' action in the Temple?

Jesus' action was shocking, but his words were not unprecedented. In fact he was quoting from the OT prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah.

- **Read Isaiah 56:1-8.** (especially v. 7) As you read, it might help to know that the ancient King David had prohibited foreigners and disabled people from the temple. This passage announces God's intentions for the future of His Temple. What do you think Jesus meant by quoting this? Would he be able to say any similar things now?
- **Read Jeremiah 7:1-11.** (especially v. 11) God spoke through Jeremiah to address the disconnect between Israel's life and worship. Where do you feel the strongest connection between Sunday worship and daily life? Where do you feel the biggest disconnect?

Read John 2:19-22. For ancient Jews, the temple was the center of God's presence in the world, the place to receive God's forgiveness, and a glimpse of heaven on earth. Jesus offered himself, and the community of his disciples, in place of the temple.

- When do you feel most connected to the presence of God in Christ?
 - Do you struggle to accept God's forgiveness? Allow your groupmates to reassure you that Jesus came to forgive the sins of his followers.
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Apply

Jesus saw even God's own Temple in Jerusalem becoming an obstacle to the dawning of God's Kingdom on earth. Reflect with your group: Are there any seemingly good things in your life that are keeping you from living as a disciple of Jesus in the arrival of His Kingdom?

Pray

Jesus re-announced God's intention to hear the prayers of all His people. Be sure to take time for everyone to pray in your group. You might just want to leave some silence for prayer. Or you might even think of very short prayers that give a chance for prayer for those who are less comfortable praying out loud.