

I. Judgmental Jesus

A. Author couches cleansing of the temple account in between the cursing of the Fig tree in order that the Fig Tree account would serve as an interpretive guide to understanding the cleansing of the Temple (i.e. Judgment)

B. Jesus quotes Isaiah 56.7 & Jeremiah 7.11 which tells us about the teaching that the people were so astonished by and the chief priests wanted to destroy him on the account of

1. Is. 56.7: The Temple are is not to be cut off to nations
 - a. God loves the nations
 - b. Israelites cutting them off removes them from “depending” on Him in Temple
2. Jeremiah 7.11: Set in the context of people doing what they wanted outside the Temple and coming into the Temple and trying to obey God externally (Robbing God of glory)
 - a. God will not tolerate half hearted worship

C. Jesus’ actions are symbolically picturing His judgment on Israel’s idolatry that is attempting to be couched in false worship towards the one true God

1. False worship is occurring
2. Jesus (vs. 21) will curse (Judge) this false worship

II. Averting Judgmental Jesus

A. After being questioned about the cursed fig tree that was destroyed, Jesus responds by calling us to have “faith in God”

1. Quantifies that “faith” by saying that one must believe in the particular God who can move mtns and throw them into the sea

B. Most everyone would have said they had “faith in God” in the Temple...the difference is that those who confess and believe and trust in the God that moves mountains and throws them into the sea, can believe that even their idolatry can be removed through faith

III. Evidences of Judgment averted

A. True Faith in God prays because it depends upon God to remove mountains, not on self to do so

B. True Faith forgives because it understands the lengths to which it has been forgiven

C. These things are evidences of the kind of faith that saves one from Judgment

1. If this kind of faith does not exude in your life it is indicative of the fact that you may not possess true faith and judgment may still be on you

Questions:

1. Discuss some ways we use things to get things we really want.
2. What are some ways we may be “in the Temple” (i.e. Trying to obey God externally to hopefully get His benefits but not actually loving Him for who He is)?
3. How does the cursing of the Fig Tree fit into the story of the Temple?
4. Can God judge and be angry like we see here and still be God? Why or why not?
5. Why would Jesus move from the evidence of a cursed Fig Tree to “Faith in God?”
6. What does Faith in God and the moving of mountains have to do with one another? What does it have to do with judgment?
7. How does the Gospel fit into this story?
8. Where are you in this story and how does the Gospel fit into your story?
9. Discuss how prayer & forgiveness manifest the reality of Faith in God.

10. What are some idols in your life? How are you not Faith in God and trusting them more than God?
11. Discuss your prayer life and your pattern (or lack thereof) of forgiveness.
12. What are you depending on in life and therein holding back in prayer and forgiveness from God?