

Mark 10:32-11:25

THEME SENTENCE:

Jesus the king-judge is coming, and he will die to bring salvation from that judgement.

Since 3:7, Jesus has been teaching his disciples who he is and what he came to do. Now it is time to achieve the redemption he's been explaining to them as he goes to his death in the city which (as 11:1f will show) he will judge as fruitless. In 12:1-12, Jesus will tell the whole story in microcosm.

Jesus the ransom (... who dies to save others)

10:32-45	Jesus' death is a ransom for many	This section brings Jesus' training of his disciples to a climax: he will reveal nothing new about himself after this paragraph. We've been told three times <u>that</u> Jesus must die; now he explains <u>why</u> he must die. Jesus' death is how God will achieve the redemption Jesus has been talking about, and how he will do for us what it is impossible for us to do for ourselves (10:26-27). Jesus drinking the cup of God's wrath (cf Isaiah 51:17-22), overwhelmed in a flood of calamity (38) is the price of our salvation.
10:32-45	... but the disciples cannot 'see' it	The disciples consistently fail to understand (- why 'amazed' / 'afraid' in 32?), and this time it's James/John asking for greatness (cf 8:32; 9:34) and 'glory' in this world. But Jesus' only glory in this world is the cross (that's why 38 is a reply to their request cf John 12:23-33), because that's where people are rescued, Satan is defeated and death is destroyed. Jesus' focus is on saving people for his next-worldly-kingdom, not on what this world offers.
10:46-52	Blind eyes are opened	Bartimaeus recognises Jesus as 'the Christ' (that's what 'Son of David' means), but he cannot follow Jesus 'along the road' (ie the way of the cross, 52) until his eyes are opened. Similarly the disciples recognised Jesus as 'the Christ' (8:29) but have been blind to what kind of Christ he is. They still only half see (8:24, the only other blind man healed in Mark). How can they 'take up their cross and follow him' (8:34) until their eyes are similarly opened?

Jesus the king (... who judges fruitless Israel)

11:1-10	Jesus makes it clear: he is the king	It seems as if Jesus went out of his way to enter Jerusalem <u>as Messiah</u> (in fulfilment of Zech 9:9), certainly he is now being open (cf 1:44; 5:43; 7:36 etc). Did the crowd recognise this? 9-10 suggests that some of them did. He came not to be a teacher or prophet, but to do what only God's chosen king can do: save God's people. The significance of this is that at his trial, the only charge brought against Jesus is this claim to be the Christ/King (cf 14:61-64; 15:2, 9, 12, 26): when Israel rejects Jesus, it is a wilful rebellion against him as king.
11:11-21	... who will judge fruitless Israel	Two events are interleaved: what Jesus does to the fig-tree explains and is explained by the temple. A fig-tree is symbolic of Israel (cf Jer 8:13; Micah 7:1). Jesus significantly 'looked around' in the temple (11), just as he looked at the fig tree (13): in both cases, there's no fruit. 17 quotes two OT passages (Is 56:7; Jer 7:11) where the context is Israel's failure to produce what God expected. So as king-judge he pronounces destruction, cursing the fig-tree (14 cf 20-21) and removing from the temple the animals/coins needed. This is not 'cleansing' the temple (as we often call it), but closing down the whole sacrificial system, and thereby ending the need for a temple at all.
11:22-25	... who will bring God's promised salvation	When God intervenes to save his people from judgement, Isaiah 40:4 promises that mountains will be removed and valleys filled (which is what happens when mountains are put into the sea), and Zech 14:10 promises that the Mount of Olives will move/be flattened into the Dead Sea and only the mount of Jerusalem will stand. Since 6:30f Jesus has been explaining that he is the Redeemer, bringing back his people from exile, on paths through the desert and sea. In other words, 23 is a promise that God will accomplish his OT-promised salvation (available to anyone who has faith in God 22, 24). If Jesus is the king-judge, how much we need this forgiveness (25).