

Driving Out Injustice: A Socio-Economic Interpretation of Mark 11:11-25 in Light of Mark's Listening Audience

Thesis Abstract

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There have been countless articles and monographs published that offer an interpretation of the temple event and/or the fig tree episodes in Mark 11:11-25. However, to date there is no publication that attempts to understand how Mark's first-century audience understood this episode in light of their oral and socio-economic context. This study attempts to fill this gap by using the context of Mark's audience as well as the function of the fig tree and temple event narratives within the plot structure of Mark's gospel to inform our detailed analysis of each passage. Using this method, it will be demonstrated that Jesus' action and teaching in the interwoven fig tree and temple event episode would have been understood as an opposition to the unjust socio-economic system of redistribution, and to those who use it to take advantage of the poor. Furthermore, since oral story telling is participatory in nature, Mark's audience would have understood the entire episode, especially Jesus' teaching in verse 23-25, as a call to actively oppose injustice through faithful prayer and living in just social and economic relationships with one another.