

# Discovering the Real Jesus (part 4 of 6): Textual Comparisons (II)

**Description:** The withered fig tree and the sick women; some differences between the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew.

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Comparative Religion](#) > [Jesus](#)

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## The Withered Fig Tree (Mark 11: 12-25, Matthew 21: 12-22)

<b>Mark 11: 12-25</b>	<b>Matthew 21: 12-22</b>
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<sup>12</sup>The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. <sup>13</sup>Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, **because it was not the season for figs.** <sup>14</sup>Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

<sup>15</sup>On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, <sup>16</sup>and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. <sup>17</sup>And as he taught them, he said, "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.'"

<sup>18</sup>The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

<sup>19</sup>When evening came, they went out of the city.

### **The Withered Fig Tree**

<sup>20</sup>**In the morning**, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. <sup>21</sup>Peter remembered and said to Jesus, **"oe Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"**

<sup>22</sup>"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. <sup>23</sup>"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. <sup>24</sup>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. <sup>25</sup>And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

<sup>12</sup>Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. <sup>13</sup>"It is written," he said to them, "oe 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'oe

<sup>14</sup>The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. <sup>15</sup>But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "oe Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

<sup>16</sup>"oe Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "oe Yes," replied Jesus, "oe have you never read, oe 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"

<sup>17</sup>And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

### **The Fig Tree Withers**

<sup>18</sup>Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. <sup>19</sup>Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, **"oe May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.**

<sup>20</sup>When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. **"oe How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.**

<sup>21</sup>Jesus replied, "oe I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. <sup>22</sup>If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

In Mark's version, Jesus seeing in a distance a fig tree went over to looking for fruit. Since it was still not the right season, no food was found on the tree. Jesus after making this understandable human error still curses the good tree. As for Matthew, he deletes the information about it not being the right season, since this would imply that Jesus destroyed a tree for no justifiable reason. Matthew leaves the reader to think that the tree was barren and therefore deserved to be destroyed.

Furthermore, in Mark the disciples notice that the tree has withered away the following day. Yet, in Matthew, the tree withers away immediately demonstrating the power of Jesus and the amazement of the disciples. Moreover, Matthew makes other significant changes to the passage, so for example, where Mark mentions "a house of prayer for all nations", Matthew omits "all nations" to satisfy his Jewish readership.

### **Sick Woman (Mark 5: 24-35, Matthew 9:20-23)**

<b>Mark 5: 24-35</b>	<b>Matthew 9:20-23</b>
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A large crowd followed and pressed around him. <sup>25</sup>And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. <sup>26</sup>She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. <sup>27</sup>When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, <sup>28</sup>because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." <sup>29</sup>Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

<sup>30</sup>At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

<sup>31</sup>"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

<sup>32</sup>**But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.** <sup>33</sup>Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup>He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

<sup>20</sup>Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. <sup>21</sup>

She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

<sup>22</sup>Jesus turned and saw her.

"Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

In Mark, the woman touches Jesus' cloak and is cured. Jesus felt the power going out of him and realized that someone had touched him but he did not know where the power went and who had touched him. Whilst the woman was already cured, in Mark, Jesus was still trying to figure out what had happened.

In Matthew, Jesus is far more powerful. He immediately knew who touched him and the woman was healed only after Jesus spoke, as if the healing power awaited Jesus' command.

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