

# *Nothing But Leaves*

**Mark 11:12-26**



**18<sup>th</sup> april 2021**  
**ps ng swee ming**

# Nothing But Leaves

## **Mark 11:12-14**

***12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.***

***13 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.***

***14 Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.***



# *Nothing But Leaves*

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**Questions:**

***Did Jesus just curse the fig tree  
because he could not find any  
fruit to satisfy his hunger ?***

***Is that reasonable ?***

***It's not even the season for figs  
to bear fruit...***

***Did Jesus wake up on the wrong  
side of his bed ?***

***Where is the love, compassion,  
mercy ....***

- 
- 'HALT' from  
Alpha Parenting**
- **H for Hunger**
  - **A for Anxious**
  - **L for Lonely**
  - **T for Tired**

*The  
Skeptic's  
Annotated  
BIBLE*

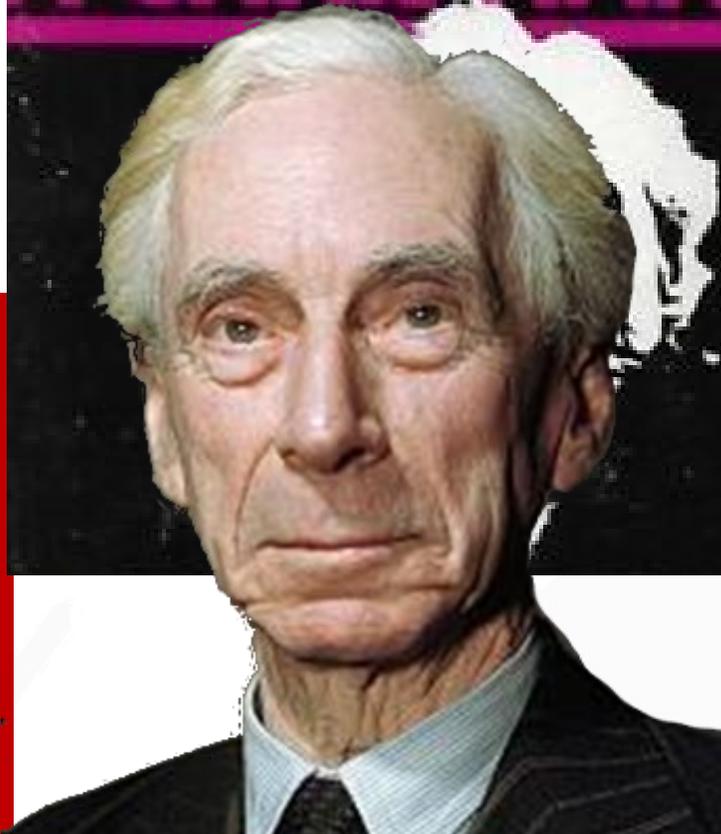


**Steve Wells:**

**“Jesus kills a fig tree for not bearing figs, even though it was out of season. He did this to show the world just how much God hates figs.”**

**BERTRAND  
RUSSELL**

**WHY I AM NOT  
A CHRISTIAN**



**Louis Cable:**

**“Now to curse a fig tree for not bearing fruit in March is not unlike kicking a dog because it cannot speak English thereby punishing it for the inability to do the impossible.”**

William Barclay

With a New Foreword by Alister E. McGrath

The Gospel of Matthew,  
Volume One



“just doesn't  
ring true...”

Barclay



The Gospel of Matthew  
Vol. 1

Barclay



The Gospel of John  
Vol. 2

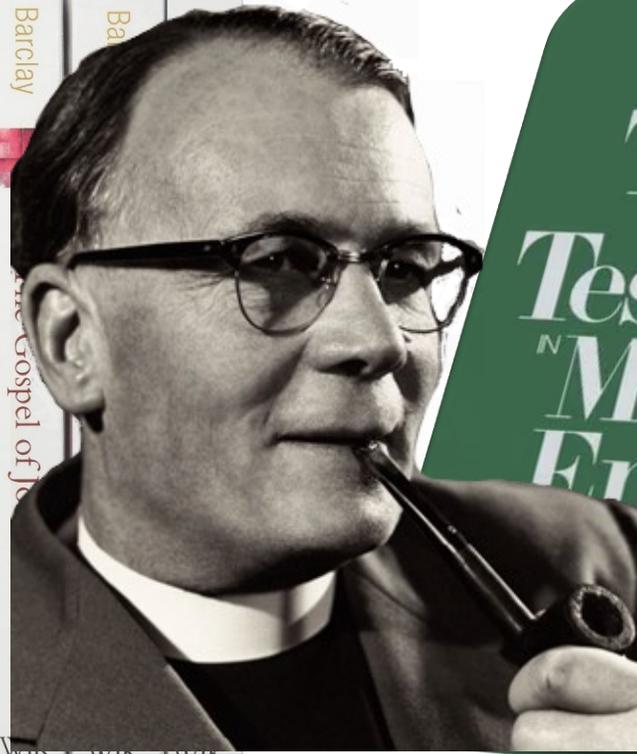
Barclay



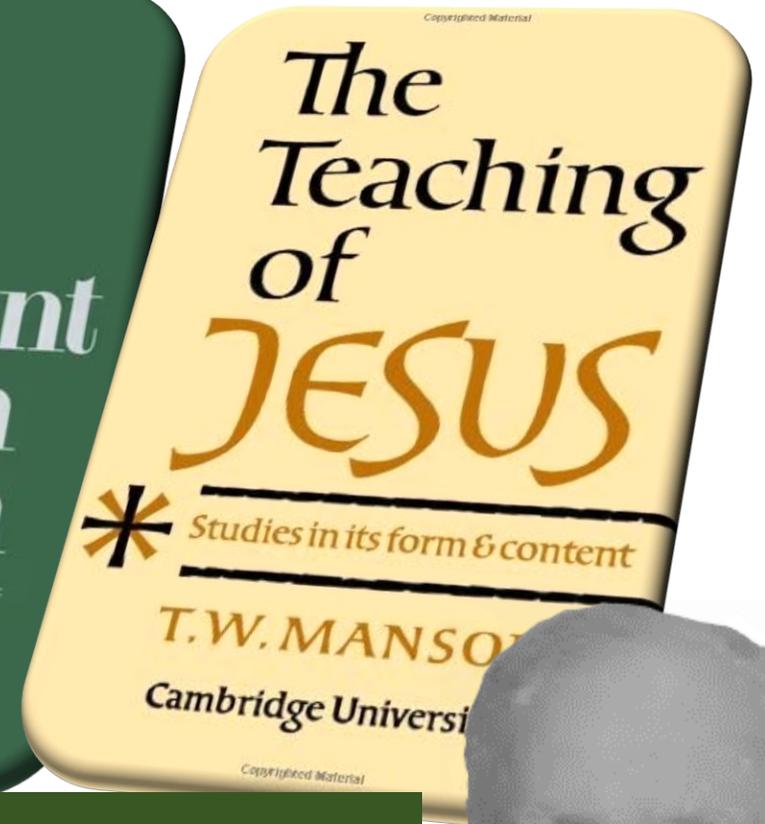
The Gospel of John  
Vol. 2

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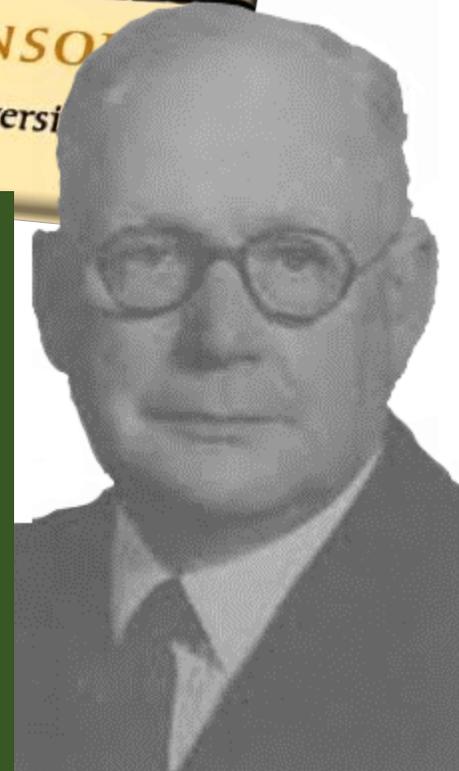
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The  
New  
Testament  
in  
Modern  
English  
Edition  
Phillips



“a story of  
miraculous  
power wasted  
in the interest  
of ill temper...”



“venting His  
feeling of  
frustration and  
despair upon  
the fig tree...”

*Calling all children ...*



# What's Wrong !

Find 4 things that are wrong with this picture:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Then complete by colouring the picture.

# *Nothing But Leaves*

*Calling All Youths :  
In just 30 words, give  
your summary why Jesus  
cursed the Fig Tree ?*



# Plant Symbols of Israel

- **THE OLIVE TREE** is a symbol of Israel's Religious privileges.
- **THE VINE** is a symbol of Israel's Spiritual privileges.
- **THE FIG-TREE** is a symbol of Israel's National privileges.



# Figs – Symbolism of Israel

## Old Testament Ref

*Hos 9:10* "When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree...."

## New Testament Ref

**Luke 13:6-9** Parable of the Barren Fig Tree in a 'vineyard'

*Matt 24:32-35* "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near....."





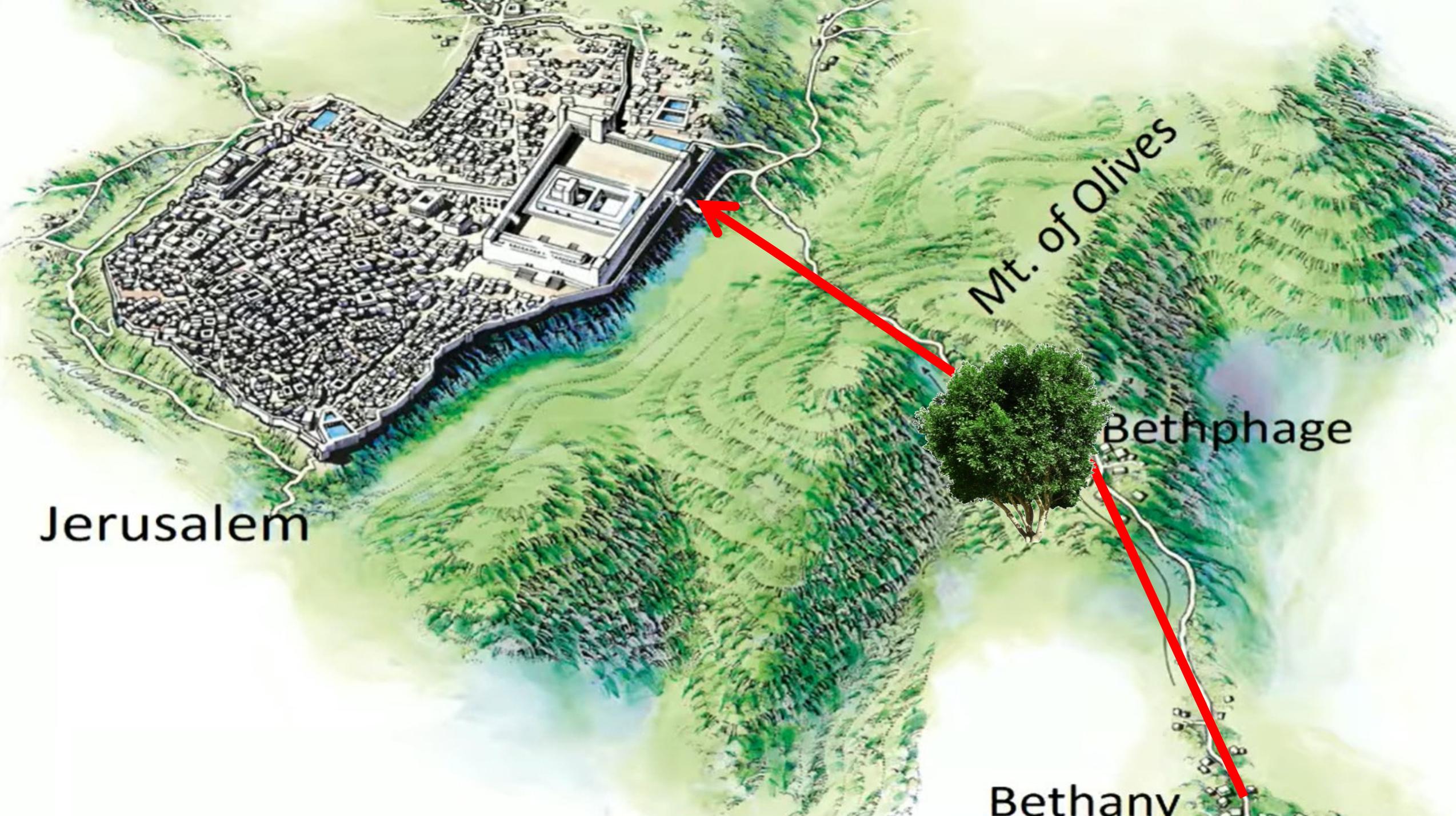
**PEACE  
BLESSEDNESS  
CONTENTMENT**

***Zechariah 3:10  
1 Kings 4:25  
Micah 4:4***

# **Facts About Figs**

- **Take about 3 years to reach maturity and bear fruits.**
- **Generally a very hardy tree that grows well & fruits easily...**
- **The fruit of the fig tree normally appears before the leaves...**
- **Two main fruiting seasons— June/July & August/Sept**  
**Pre-seasonal tiny figs ‘taksh’ (Arabic) can develop in March/April**  
**(Passover occurs about April)**





Jerusalem

Mt. of Olives

Bethphage

Bethany

# Nothing But Leaves

**So this incident actually happened ....**

**Just as recorded in the Bible ...**

**Everything Jesus did ...**

- ↪ **there is a reason...**
- ↪ **there is a purpose...**
- ↪ **there is an explanation...**

**Jesus will not misuse His power ...**

- **Temptation of Jesus ...**
- **40 Days of fasting ....**
- **Very hungry....**



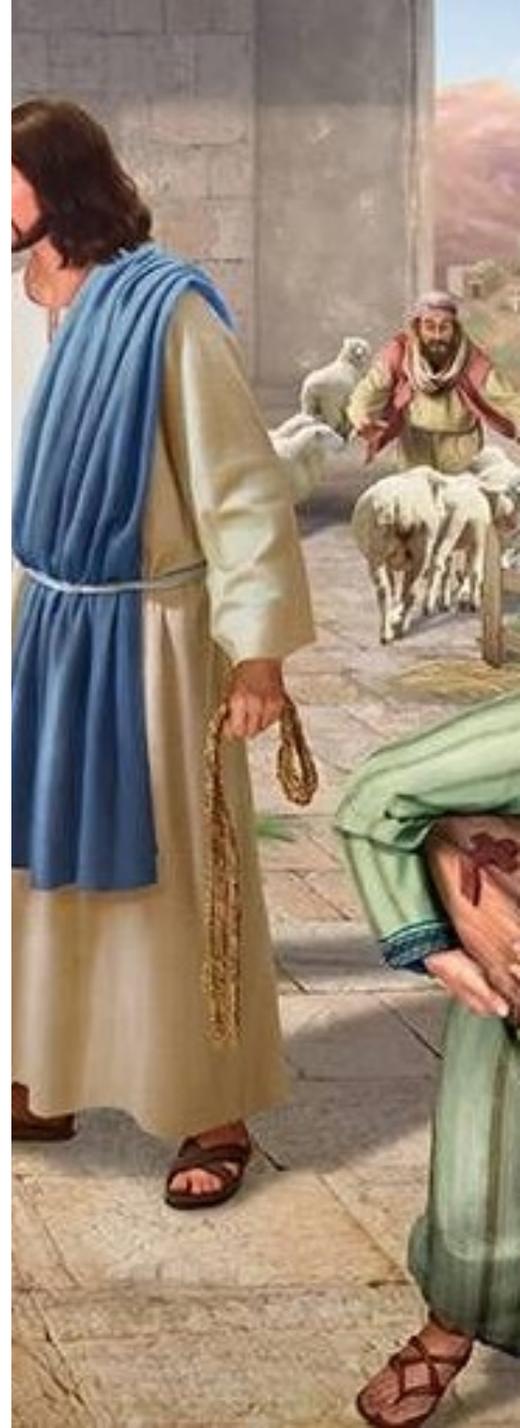
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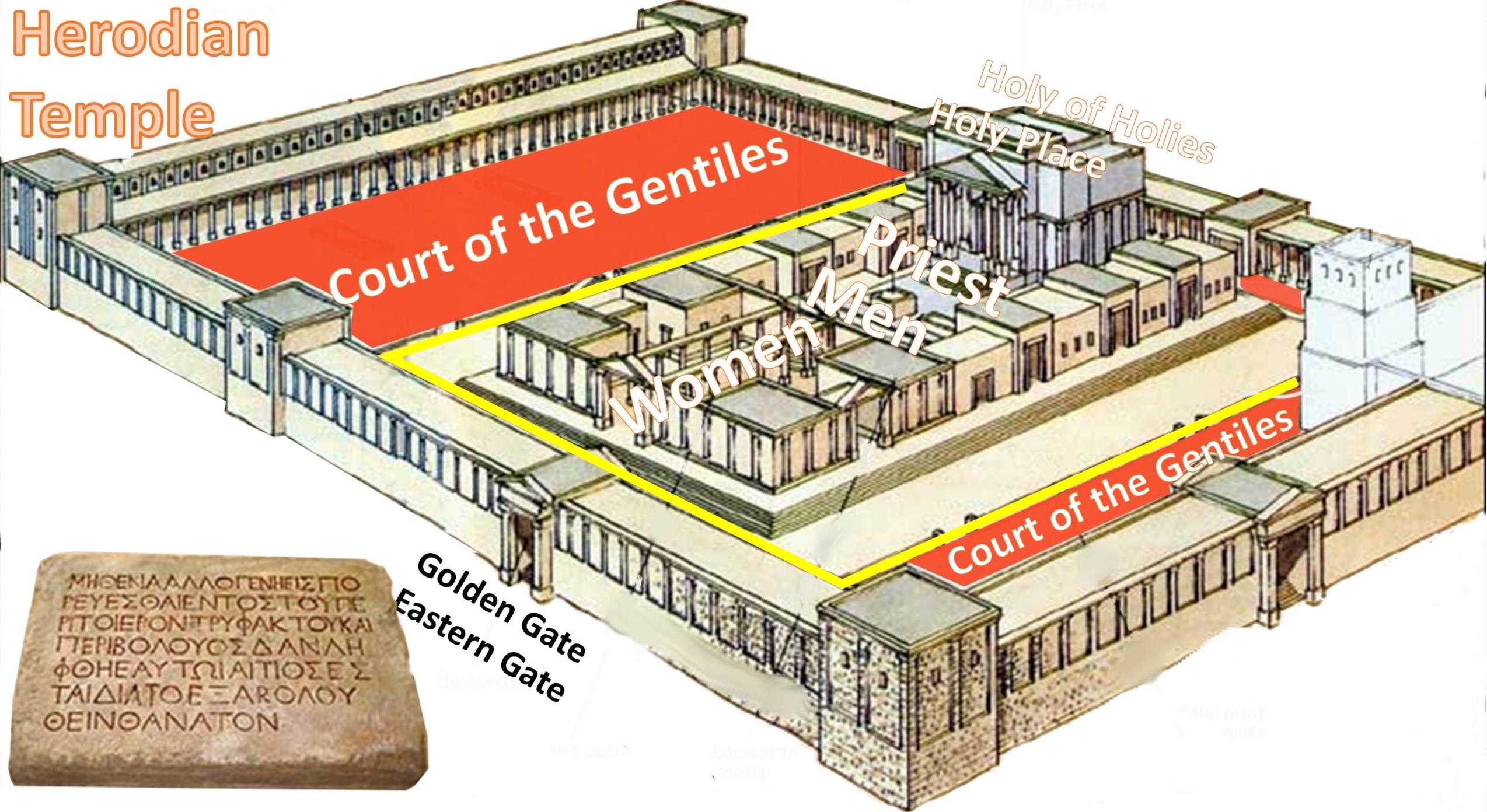
**“Markan Sandwich”**

**Sandwiched between v12-14 & v20**

***<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,...***



# Herodian Temple



Court of the Gentiles

Holy of Holies  
Holy Place

Women  
Men  
Priest

Court of the Gentiles

Golden Gate  
Eastern Gate



ΜΗΘΕΝΙΑΛΛΟΓΕΝΗΕΙΣΓΙΟ  
ΡΕΥΕΣΘΑΙΕΝΤΟΣΤΟΥΤΕ  
ΡΙΤΟΙΕΡΟΝΤΡΥΦΑΚΤΟΥΚΑΙ  
ΠΕΡΙΒΟΛΟΥΟΣΔΑΝΑΗ  
ΦΘΗΕΑΥΤΩΙΑΙΤΙΟΣΕΣ  
ΤΑΙΔΙΑΤΟΕΞΑΡΟΛΟΥ  
ΘΕΙΝΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ

# PASSOVER @ Jerusalem

THREE Compulsory Jewish feasts (Exo 23:14-17):

- Passover,
- Pentecost &
- Tabernacles

➤ All Males appear before the Lord (Exo 34:22-23)

➤ Must not come empty handed (Deut 16:16)

## 1. Temple Sacrifice (Lev 1)

- Lamb, Bull, Sheep, Goat, Ram...
- Poor : Dove or Pigeon...
- All “Without Blemish”\*\* ....



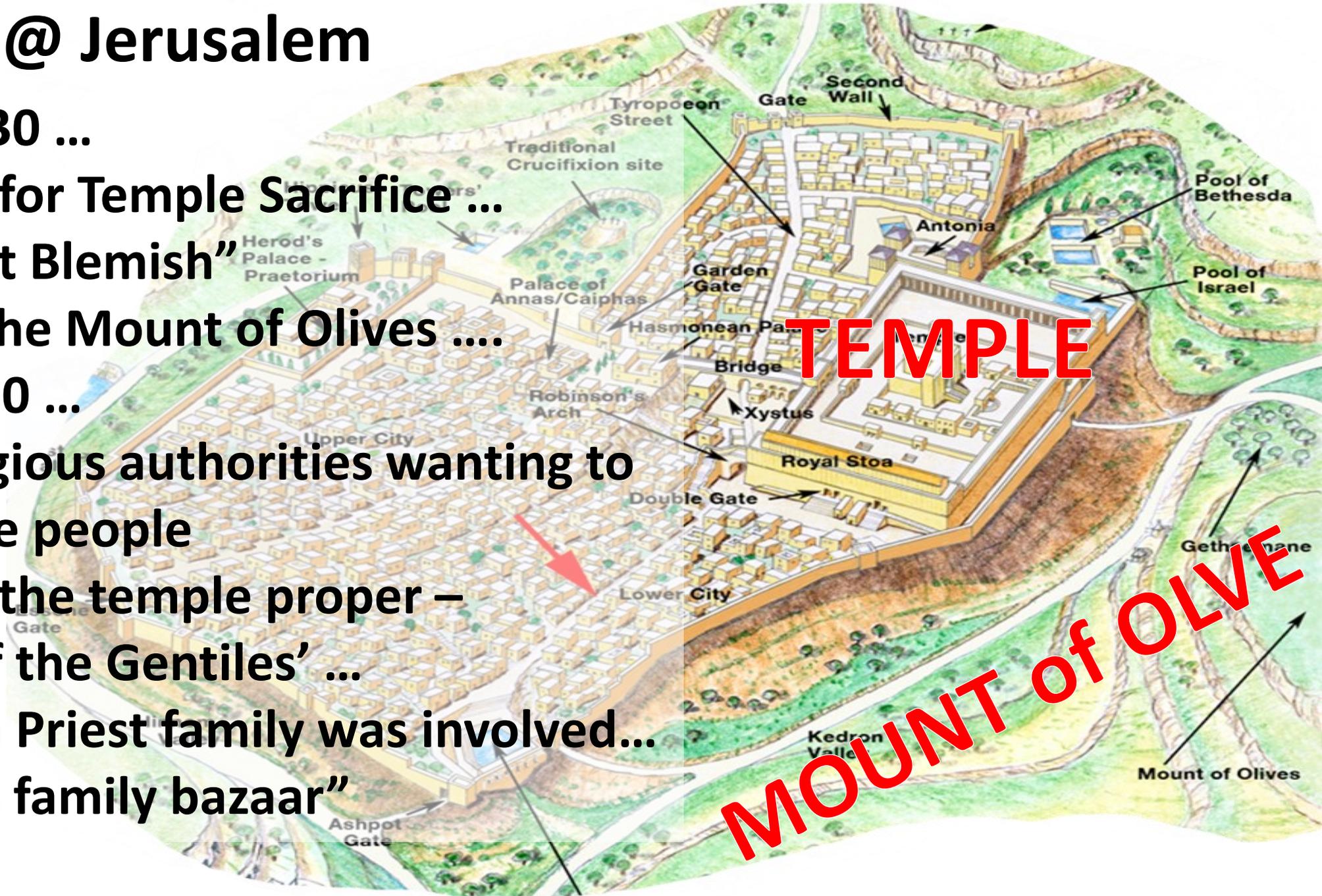
# PASSOVER @ Jerusalem

Before AD 30 ...

- Animals for Temple Sacrifice ...
- “Without Blemish”
- Sold @ the Mount of Olives ....

About AD 30 ...

- The Religious authorities wanting to ‘help’ the people
- Done @ the temple proper – ‘Court of the Gentiles’ ...
- The High Priest family was involved...
- ? “Annas family bazaar”



# PASSOVER @ Jerusalem

1. Temple Sacrifice (Lev 1)
2. **Temple Tax (Exo 30:13)**
  - Half a shekel by everyone 20yrs and older

Shekel



Tyrian shekel



Melqarth-Herakles  
(pagan god of Tyre)



Roman  
drachmas



# PASSOVER @ Jerusalem

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**Est Normal Popn of Jerusalem  $\cong$  30 to 40K**

**Josephus the Jewish historian recorded ...**

**↳ During Passover in AD 66 ...**

**$\cong$  255,600 lambs sacrificed...**

**Conservatively 1 Lamb for 5 people ...**

**$\cong$  1 to 1.5 million people**

**Herodian Temple estimated to be able to house  $\cong$  75,000 people ...**



# PASSOVER @ Jerusalem

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Imagine the....

↪ **Crowd...**

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↪ **Noise ...**

↪ **Smell ...**

↪ **Financial Transactions ....**



# PASSOVER @ Jerusalem

## Animal for Sacrifice ...

- Syndicate at work ...
- “Inspectors” ....
- Price ‘gouging’

## Doves / Pigeons...

- Poor man’s sacrifice ...
- Eg 2p -> 70+p

## Money Changers ....

- Need to change to the official currency for the Temple Tax
- Exchange rate was not fixed ...



# *Nothing But Leaves*

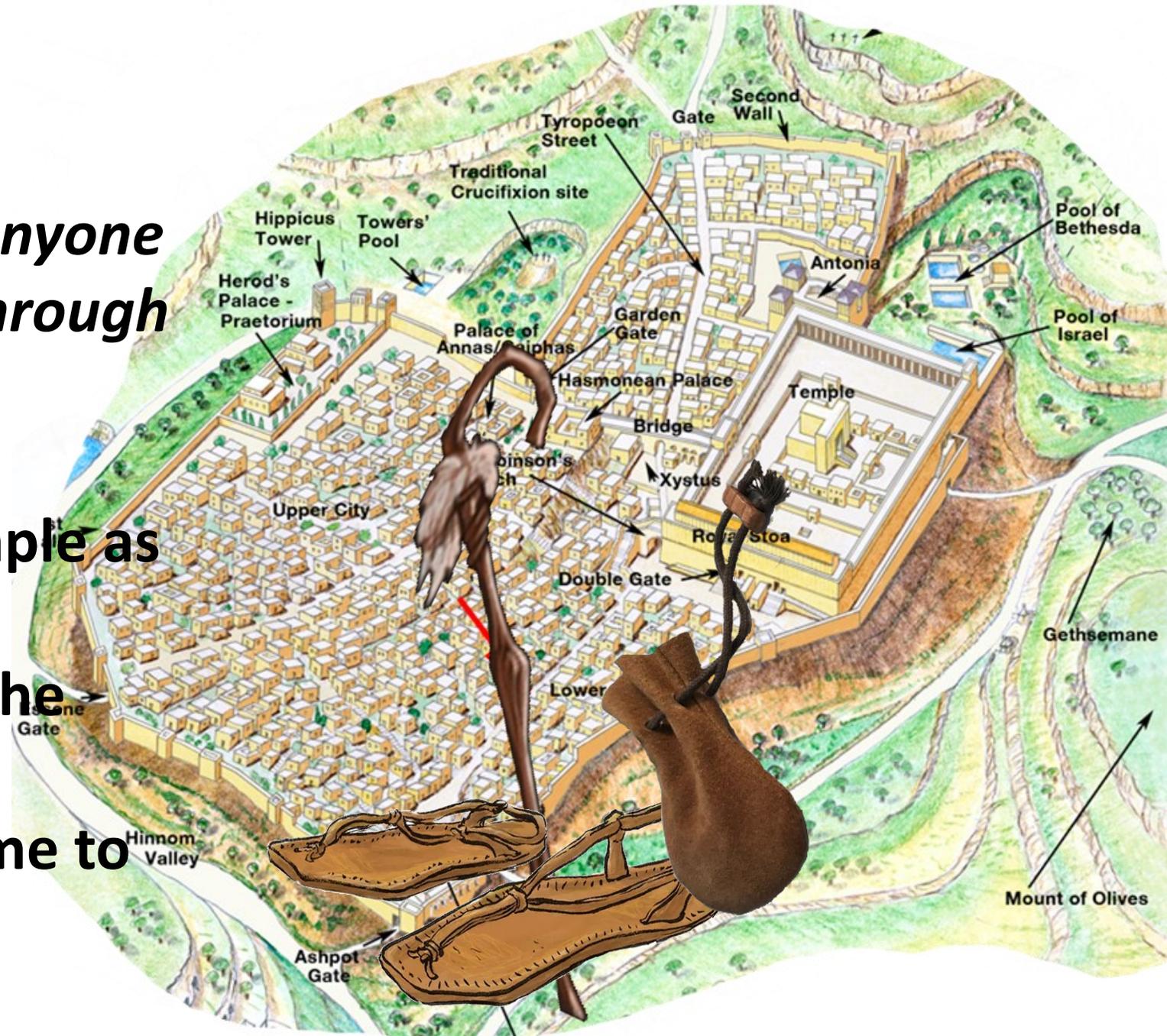
***v16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts....***

**Just to explain...**

**People were using the temple as a shortcut...**

**Not allowed according to the Jewish Mishnah law...**

**As a result people who came to the Temple to pray ....**

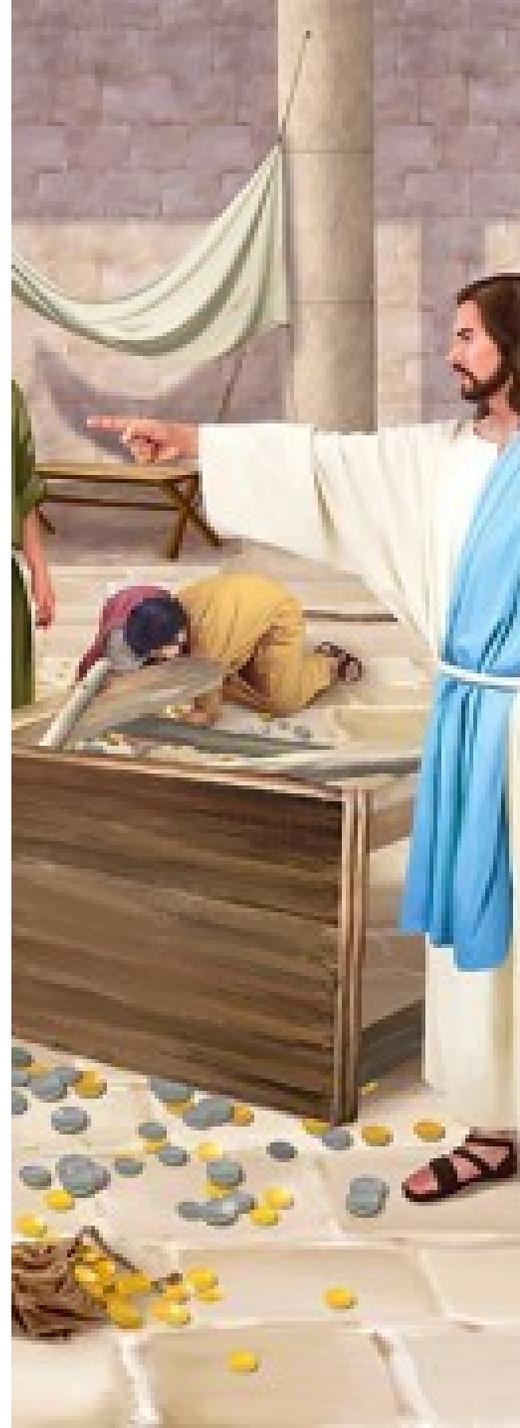


# *Nothing But Leaves*

***17 And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written:***

***"My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations' (Isa 56:7)?***

***But you have made it 'a den of robbers' (Jer 7:11)."***



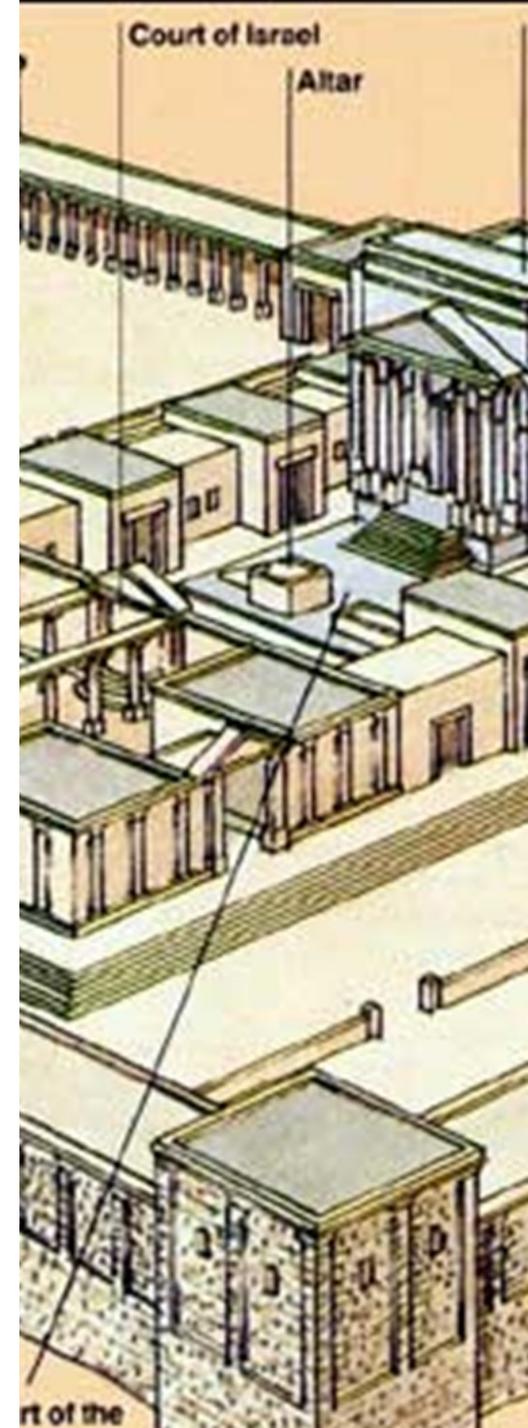
# Nothing But Leaves

Isa 56

***v6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant —***

***v7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar;***

***v7b FOR MY HOUSE WILL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS."***



# Nothing But Leaves

***18 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.***

***19 When evening came, they went out of the city.***



# *Nothing But Leaves*

***20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots.***

***21 Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"***



# *Nothing But Leaves*

**Learn the LESSON from the Fig tree...**

**Jesus DID NOT Curse the Fig Tree  
because it did not have Fruits**

**Jesus CURSED the Fig Tree  
because it ONLY PRETENDED to have Fruits...**

**It was being Hypocritical -**

**Not Real, Not Truthful, Not Authentic....**

**AUTHENTIC FIG TREE with LEAVES will have FRUITS**



# *Nothing But Leaves*

Learn the LESSON from the Fig tree...

It was an OBJECT LESSON to the Jews esp  
the Jewish Religious Authorities

Temple Worship / Festival / Sacrifices all  
going on ...

Outwardly everything look nice and good  
religious ...

**BUT**

Inwardly it is Rotten, Corrupt, Fruitless...

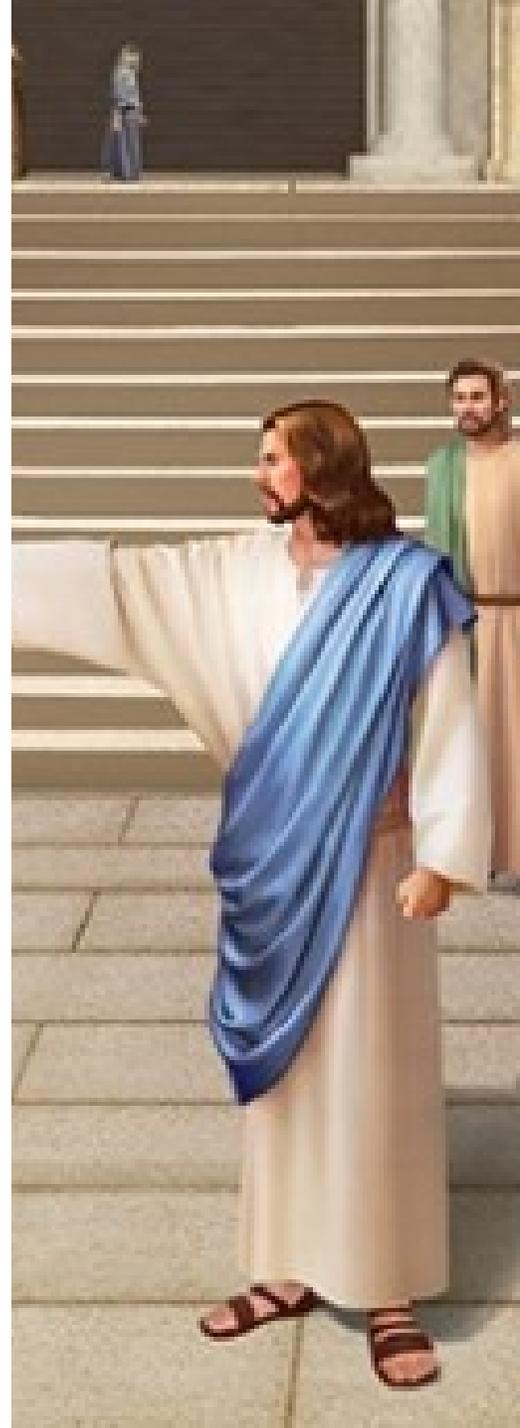


# Nothing But Leaves

**Matt 23:27-28**

***27 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.***

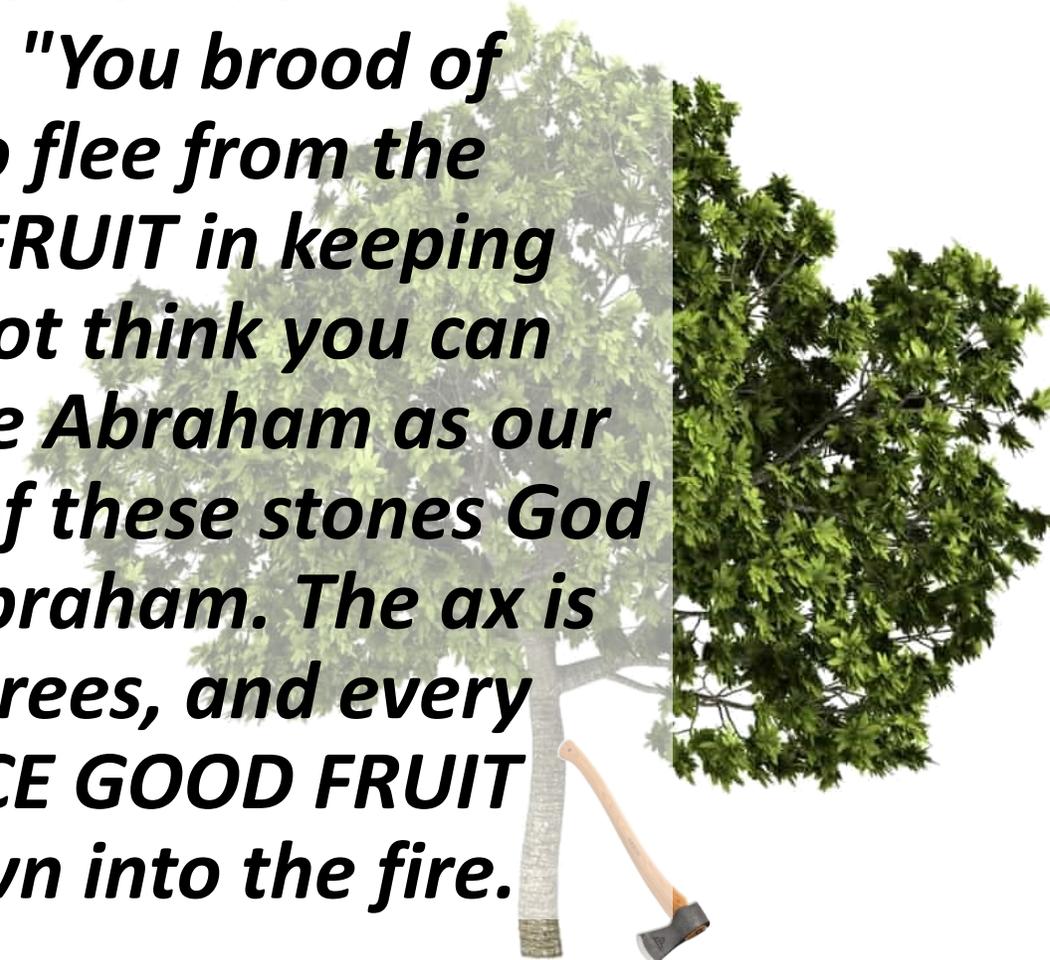
***28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.***



# ***John the Baptist 1st warning ...***

***Matt 3:7-10***

***But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? PRODUCE FRUIT in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not PRODUCE GOOD FRUIT will be cut down and thrown into the fire.***



# Nothing But Leaves

2<sup>nd</sup> warning –

- **Luke 13:6-9 Parable of the Barren Fig Tree**  
Planted in a ‘vineyard’ ....
- **3yrs\* still ‘No Fruit’ (Lev 19:23-25)**
  - ↳ ***“Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?”***
  - ↳ **Gardener – One more year ...**
    - Dig around it ...**
    - Fertilize it ...**
  - ↳ **One last chance ...**



# *Nothing But Leaves*

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Application...

Q: Are we

“Nothing But Leaves with no Fruit”

OR “Full of Leaves with Fruits” ?

OR “Bearing Fruit with or without leaves” ?

Is our Faith Real ?

Christianity Authentic

Or Only looks good on the outside BUT empty within ?

having Form without Substance !!!



# *Nothing But Leaves*

**Q: What does it mean to “bear fruit” ?**

**In John 15 His desire is that we ...**

↪ **v2 “bear fruit”...**

↪ **v2 “bear more fruit” and**

↪ **v5 “bear much fruit”**

↪ **v16 “You did not choose me,**

**but I chose you**

**and appointed you**

**to go and bear fruit**

**— fruit that will last.”**

↪ **v2,6 “every branch  
that does not bear  
fruit he ... throws  
away and withers...  
into the fire and  
burned...”**

**Q: What is this “fruit” ?**

**Q: How is this “bearing fruit” ?**



# *Nothing But Leaves*

**Bearing FRUITs ....**

**A Healthy, well rooted tree will bear Fruit...**

**Similarly a Christian who is 'abiding' with Christ will grow and bear Fruit ...**

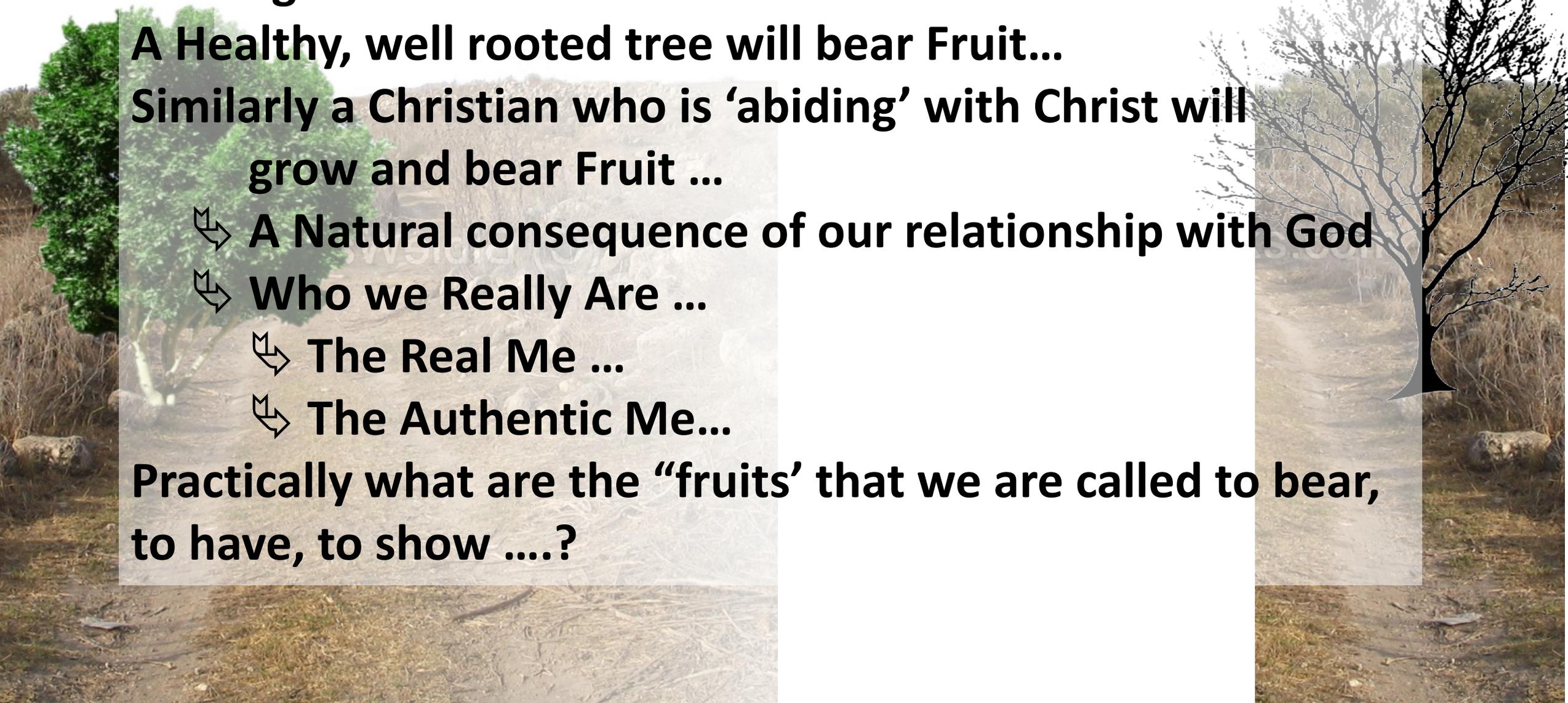
↪ **A Natural consequence of our relationship with God**

↪ **Who we Really Are ...**

↪ **The Real Me ...**

↪ **The Authentic Me...**

**Practically what are the "fruits" that we are called to bear, to have, to show ....?**



# *Nothing But Leaves*

**Bearing / Having / Showing FRUITs ....**

**Our WORDS (Speech) ....**

- ↪ **Are our words edifying ?**
- ↪ **Are we speaking the truth in love ?**
- ↪ **Does our speech reflect Christ within ...**

**Our WALK (Character)**

- ↪ **Do we manifest the Fruit of the Spirit in our walk – *Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness & Self-Control (Gal 5:22-23)***

**Lifeway Survey\* : Why Do People Leave Church ?**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> - 32% : Church Members judgmental/hypocritical**



# *Nothing But Leaves*

## **Our WORKs (Service)**

- ↪ Is our Faith visible ?
- ↪ Is our Faith tangible ?
- ↪ Is Matt 5:16 true in my life ?

## **Our WITNESS (Testimony)**

- ↪ Both verbal and non-verbal
- ↪ Do we draw people to Christ ?

## **Our WEALTH (Blessings)**

- ↪ It not the 10% we tithe but what we do with the 90% we 'steward' ...
- ↪ Blessed to be a Blessing ...

## **Our WORSHIP**

- ↪ Who is truly our 'god' / 'God' ? (Matt 6:24)
- ↪ We are who we 'Worship' ...



# *Nothing But Leaves*

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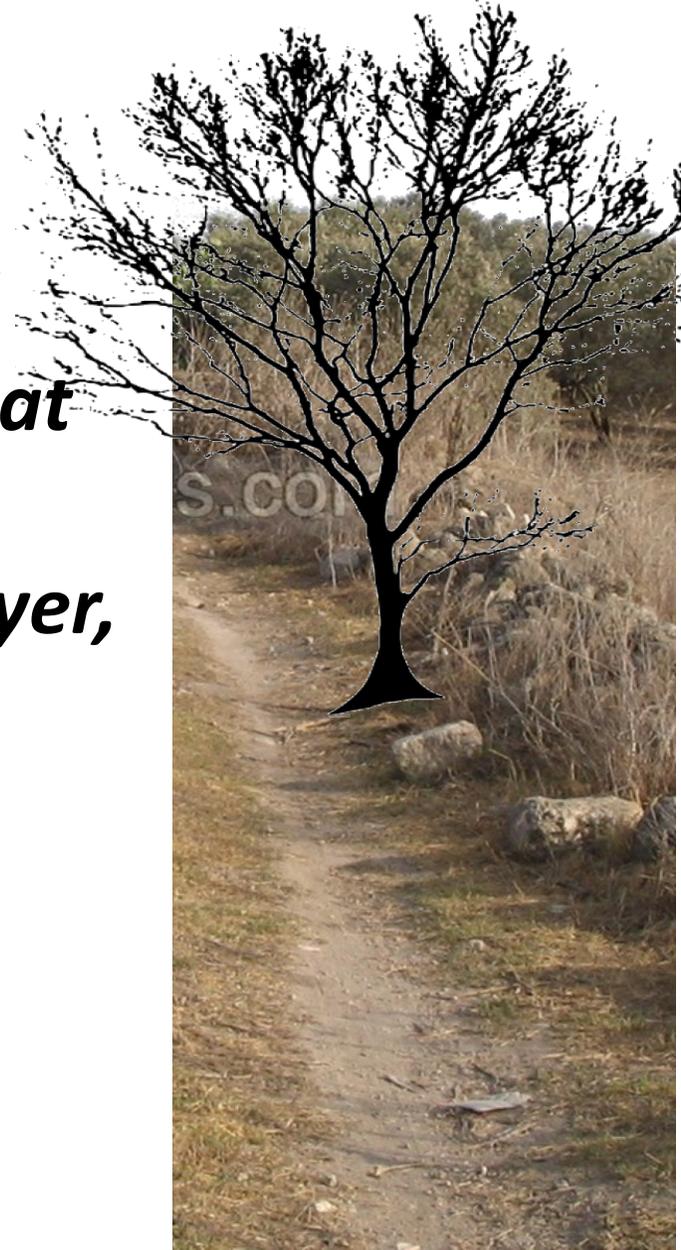
***22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered.***

***23 "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.***

***24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.***

**FAITH = FRUITFUL**

**FRUITFUL = FAITH**



# *Nothing But Leaves*

***25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."***



# *Nothing But Leaves*

Who am I ?

Am I *'Nothing But Leaves'* ...

outwardly looks good talking, doing, serving,  
even ministering...

looks presentable ...

**BUT** inwardly

empty & hurting ...

depressed, grumbling, angry ...

feeling hypocritical ...

**OR** Am I Being Fruitful in all my 6 "W's" ...

with or without leaves ...

abiding in the vine ...

**GROWING FAITH, BEARING FRUIT & SHOWING FORGIVENESS**

