

(1) Try to envision yourself present in Jerusalem on the day that Jesus entered, riding upon a donkey. What would have been your reaction? Would you have preferred and perhaps expected him to come on a white stallion at the head of a massive army to defeat the Roman invaders? Talk a bit about the difference between Christ's first coming and his second coming. Read Revelation 19:11-21 and discuss the differences between that text and this one in Matthew 21:1-17.

(2) What do you think God thinks about "commercialized religion"? What do you think about it? Can you cite some examples of it in today's Christian world, or perhaps from some experience of yours in the past? How does it affect you? If you had the opportunity to speak to a TV evangelist or pastor today who uses religion and the name of Jesus to make money for himself/herself, what would you say?

(3) Why do we speak of what Jesus did as a "judgment" of the temple as much as a "cleansing"? Who or what is the true temple of God?

(4) Read again Matthew 21:14. How does it strike you? Does it almost appear as if someone inserted this verse after Matthew had recorded the story? Why does it seem so out of place? What does it tell you about Jesus himself?

(5) Do you make excuses not to pray for people to be healed? What excuses have you made in the past? Does atmosphere or place or time have an impact on your decision whether or not to pray for someone? If so, why? Why should there never be an inappropriate time or inconvenient place to pray for the sick?