

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

18 In the morning, as Jesus returned to the city, he became hungry.

19 When he saw a fig tree by the road, he went up to the tree and found nothing on it but leaves. He said to the tree, "May fruit never grow on you again!" At once the fig tree dried up.

20 The disciples were surprised to see this. They asked, "How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?"

21 Jesus answered them, "I can guarantee this truth: If you have faith and do not doubt, you will be able to do what I did to the fig tree. You could also say to this mountain, 'Be uprooted and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. 22 Have faith that you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

Jesus' Authority Challenged

23 Then Jesus went into the temple courtyard and began to teach. The chief priests and the leaders of the people came to him. They asked, "What gives you the right to do these things? Who told you that you could do this?"

24 Jesus answered them, "I, too, have a question for you. If you answer it for me, I'll tell you why I have the right to do these things.

25 Did John's right to baptize come from heaven or from humans?"

They discussed this among themselves. They said, "If we say, 'from heaven,' he will ask us, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'" 26 But if we say, 'from humans,' we're afraid of what the crowd might do. All those people think of John as a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Jesus told them, "Then I won't tell you why I have the right to do these things.