

The Gospel of Matthew

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

MATTHEW 21

Day 1



Heavenly Father, let me not remain unchanged by your word today. As I read your word, help me to know your love and see the beauty of Jesus and to treasure him above all.

- Read chapter 21
- Chapter 21 begins Passion Week– the last seven days of Jesus' life. As you read the chapter again, look for the ways Jesus' kingly authority is displayed in this chapter.
- What is one truth in today's passage that moves your heart to praise, thanksgiving, confession, action or love for God?

Day 2- Matthew 21:1-11

1. Lord in verse 3 is more than a term of respect. It was a claim to be Lord of all.¹ How is Jesus' Lordship seen in verses 1-3?

2. Verses 4 and 5 tell us the reason Jesus wanted his disciples to bring him the donkey colt. What does this symbolism tell us about what kind of king Jesus is?

For Discussion: How would a king enter a city today? How would a king enter a city in ancient history?

 Old Testament Ties:

This is the ninth of ten fulfillment passages in the book of Matthew. Each of these has shown how Jesus is the true Israel and the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. Matthew quotes from Isaiah and Zechariah (below) pointing to Jesus as the promised King. Read the scriptures below and answer the questions:

- By entering Jerusalem on a donkey, what is Jesus announcing to the people of Israel (daughter of Zion)?

- Up until now Jesus has urged those whose eyes had been opened to who he truly was, not to tell, why the change now?

- What in these prophecies in Isaiah and Zechariah have not yet been fulfilled?

- What do these prophecies tell us is cause for great rejoicing in Jesus' fulfilling of them?

*Isaiah 62:11b-12 **Say to the daughter of Zion**, "Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.*

*Zechariah 9:9-10 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! **Behold, your king is coming to you**; righteous and having salvation is he, **humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt**, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the*

chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Scholar's Note: *Hosanna* means *save now*. Most believe that in the first century it had become a cry of praise.²

3. Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims coming for Passover who wanted to know what all the excitement was about. How did the crowd's answer in verse 11 fall short?

4. How did the people respond to Jesus in verses 8-10



Behold your king is coming to you! The secret was out. But before the crown there would be the cross; the road to salvation and victory was the road to suffering and dying for Jesus. Because Jesus took that path of suffering, because he bore our sins on the cross, and then rose to life victorious over death, we who follow Jesus as our King are now called *The Holy People, The Redeemed, Sought out, and Not Forsaken* (Is. 62:11). What a reason to rejoice!

- ❖ How do each of these names from Isaiah, that Jesus secured for his children, impact your heart?

- ❖ How does it impact the way you live?

Day 3- Matthew 21:12-17

5. The day after Jesus entered Jerusalem as the promised King, what did he do according to verse 12?

Scholar's Note: "There were money changers and merchants in Jerusalem because many Jews traveled great distances to attend Passover. Monetary gifts to the temple had to be paid in Tyrian shekels, so people had to convert whatever they had into that currency. Furthermore, since no one wanted to transport sacrificial animals hundreds of miles, their sale was a valuable service."³

6. Why did Jesus protest this kind of activity in the temple according to verse 13?

Picture and Ponder: "By taking such decisive action, Jesus is asserting his authority over the center of Israel's religion and identity. Like the prophets of old, he protests against abuses in the temple. As Israel's great high priest, he oversees the proper use of the temple, its worship and its sacrifices. As king, he exercises authority by governing the central symbol of Israel's faith, the centerpiece of Israel's identity as God's people."⁴

Old Testament Ties:

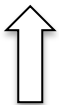
The buying, selling and money changing going on in the temple was happening in the court of the Gentiles. The Gentiles were only allowed in a certain area of the temple grounds. When Jesus cleanses the temple he quotes from Isaiah and Jeremiah (below) to make his purpose clear.

- What do you think was the attitude of the religious leaders who facilitated the commerce in the court of Gentiles?

- What was God’s purpose for Gentiles and the marginalized (eunuchs)?
- In Jeremiah’s day people thought the temple and its rituals guaranteed God’s favor and would give them immunity from the rebellious and sinful lives they were leading. How do you see the same thing at work in the religious leaders?

*Isaiah 56:3, 4a-7 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely separate me from his people”; and let not the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” For thus says the LORD:.. “I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for **my house shall be called a house of prayer** for all peoples.”*

*Jeremiah 7:9-11 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by my name, become **a den of robbers** in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord.*



God thank you that your Kingdom is for all the nations and that you adopted me into your family giving me an everlasting name!

Picture and Ponder: “... the Greek word translated “robber” (lēstēs) always carries the connotation of violent action, so that it refers to more than economic dishonesty. The word ordinarily means bandit, revolutionary, or insurrectionist, and never means thief.⁵

For Discussion: Much like in Jeremiah’s day, the temple had become a symbol of nationalism for the Jewish people. How do people have this same tendency today with the church?

7. "Where the lame, blind, deaf, or otherwise handicapped could go in the temple area was restricted."⁶ They could go in the Court of the Gentiles, but they could not bring items for their comfort (mats or crutches etc.) that would be considered "unclean." "Most Jewish authorities forbade any person lame, blind, deaf, or mute from offering a sacrifice, from "appearing before Yahweh in his temple."⁷ In light of this, what significance was there in Jesus healing the blind and lame (v.14) in the temple?

8. Compare the children and the religious leaders in verses 15-16.

 Old Testament Ties:

- In verse 16, when Jesus quotes Psalm 8 to the religious leaders, what is he saying about himself in the context of verses 1-2?

*Psalm 8:1-2 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.(ESV) **From the mouths of children and nursing babies you have ordained praise...(NET)***

Day 4- Matthew 21:18-27

Scholar's Note: "Fig leaves appear about the same time as the fruit or a little after. The green figs are edible, though sufficiently disagreeable as not usually to be eaten till June. Thus the leaves normally point to every prospect of fruit, even if not fully ripe. Sometimes, however, the green figs fall off and leave nothing but leaves."⁸

9. Jesus is acting out a parable in verses 18-19. What spiritual lesson is he teaching?

-How do you see this judgment of the fig tree connecting to the cleansing of the temple?

Scholar's Note: "Jesus is deliberately staging a symbolic act that uses an OT image in which the fig tree symbolizes Israel (Isa 28:4; Hos 9:10) and a barren fig tree symbolizes sin and corruption in the nation (Jer. 8:13; 24:8, 29:17; Hos 9:10; Joel 1:12; Mic. 7:1). He takes the opportunity afforded by the fruitless fig tree to signify the barrenness of Jerusalem and Israel and its imminent judgment."⁹

Picture and Ponder: *Doubt* [in verse 21] refers not to a certainty that God will give anything one asks, but rather to a "divided mind" that trusts God only partway and is centered more on self. Bruner says, "Doubt, in Jesus' teaching, is the decision to live as if God does not exist..."¹⁰

10. In light of the meaning of *doubt* above, what does Jesus mean when he says *have faith and do not doubt* in verse 21?



Jesus is not speaking literally when he says that with faith, his disciples could throw a mountain into the sea, but he is reiterating in a different way the truth from 19:26—*with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*. Prayer is the lifeblood and energy of a life of faith following Jesus. It helps to keep us from dead religion (commerce in the temple) and fruitless lives (the fig tree). It is the conduit through which God accomplishes great things.

- ❖ What obstacles in your family, work, or ministry that seem insurmountable do you need to bring to the Lord in prayer?

- ❖ How do you think Jesus' prayers differ from yours?

- ❖ What work would you love to see God do in your church?

11. What are the two parts of the question the priests and elders asked Jesus in verse 23?

-What are *these things* from the previous verses that they are asking about?

12. How do the leaders show in verses 25-26 that they really aren't interested in seeking truth?

- What do you see in our world today that is similar?

Day 5- Matthew 21:28-46

Picture and Ponder: "The introductory *What do you think* occurs often (17:25; 18:12; 22:17, 42; 26:66) and asks the listener (here the leaders) to ponder carefully what Jesus is saying...Through it we the readers are also invited to think carefully about the story's message."¹¹

13. How does Jesus depict the religious leaders in his parable?

-How does he depict the tax collectors and prostitutes?

-What is Jesus' indictment of the religious leaders in verse 32?

14. What efforts did the master put into the vineyard to make it productive according to verse 33?

-What was the purpose of the vineyard according to verse 34?

15. How did the landowner show long-suffering and undeserved mercy to the tenants according to verses 35-36?

16. Match the following from the parable:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ Landowner/Master | a. Jesus |
| ___ Tenants | b. The people of God/Israel |
| ___ Vineyard | c. Prophets |
| ___ Servants | d. God |
| ___ Son | e. Religious leaders |

Old Testament Ties:

Jesus quotes Psalm 118 to challenge the leaders to see that he is the fulfillment of it and what their rejection means.

- What is Jesus telling them about himself?
- What else in this Psalm points to Jesus?

*Psalm 118:19-29 Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.*

*This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.
I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.*

**The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.**

**This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.**

*This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

*Save us, we pray, O Lord!
O Lord, we pray, give us success!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.
The Lord is God,
and he has made his light to shine upon us.
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,
up to the horns of the altar!
You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God; I will extol you.
Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!*



Your work of salvation is marvelous in my eyes! Thank you God for providing Jesus as a wonderful Savior! Father you are good and your steadfast love endures forever!



In verse 43, Jesus tells the religious leaders that the kingdom will be given to a people who produce fruit. Bearing the fruit of the kingdom is the sign that one truly belongs to the King.

- ❖ What are the fruits of the kingdom that give evidence that someone truly is part of God's kingdom? Is your life growing to resemble Jesus?

17. What judgment does Jesus pronounce on them in verses 43-44?

-How does this match the religious leaders' own assessment in verse 41?

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here. How will this truth impact the way you think and act?

¹ Platt, David Platt, David Platt, David. Exalting Jesus in Matthew. (Christ-Centered Exposition)

² Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Location 20240). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

³ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (p. 590). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (p. 590). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (p. 590). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 20592-20595). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰ Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 20614-20616). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

¹¹ Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 20835-20838). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

Copyright © 2021 Holli Worthington. This document may be reproduced for learning purposes but not for profit.