

# Matthew 21 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Matthew 21:1](#)  
[Matthew 21:2](#)  
[Matthew 21:3](#)  
[Matthew 21:4](#)  
[Matthew 21:5](#)  
[Matthew 21:6](#)  
[Matthew 21:7](#)  
[Matthew 21:8](#)  
[Matthew 21:9](#)  
[Matthew 21:10](#)  
[Matthew 21:11](#)  
[Matthew 21:12](#)  
[Matthew 21:13](#)  
[Matthew 21:14](#)  
[Matthew 21:15](#)  
[Matthew 21:16](#)  
[Matthew 21:17](#)  
[Matthew 21:18](#)  
[Matthew 21:19](#)  
[Matthew 21:20](#)  
[Matthew 21:21](#)  
[Matthew 21:22](#)  
[Matthew 21:23](#)  
[Matthew 21:24](#)  
[Matthew 21:25](#)  
[Matthew 21:26](#)  
[Matthew 21:27](#)  
[Matthew 21:28](#)  
[Matthew 21:29](#)  
[Matthew 21:30](#)  
[Matthew 21:31](#)  
[Matthew 21:32](#)  
[Matthew 21:33](#)  
[Matthew 21:34](#)  
[Matthew 21:35](#)  
[Matthew 21:36](#)  
[Matthew 21:37](#)  
[Matthew 21:38](#)  
[Matthew 21:39](#)  
[Matthew 21:40](#)  
[Matthew 21:41](#)  
[Matthew 21:42](#)  
[Matthew 21:43](#)  
[Matthew 21:44](#)  
[Matthew 21:45](#)  
[Matthew 21:46](#)

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MATTHEW CONTAINS 15 PARABLES 20 MIRACLES

KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

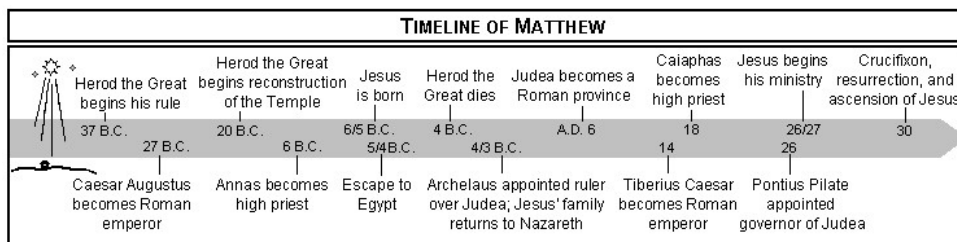


Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission  
Another Chart from Swindoll

## THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge



Source: Borrow Ryrie Study Bible

Matthew 21:1 When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

- when: Mk 11:1 Lu 19:28
- the Mount of Olives Mt 24:3 26:30 Zec 14:4 Lu 19:37 21:37 Joh 8:1 Ac 1:12

## Related Passages:

Mark 11:1-11+ (**TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**) As they \*approached ([historical present tense](#)) Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He \*sent ([historical present tense](#)) two of His disciples, 2 and \*said ([historical present tense](#)) to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a {**donkey with her** - Mt 21:2} colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it {**them** - Mt 21:2} here. 3 "If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here." 4 They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they \*untied ([historical present tense](#)) it. 5 Some of the bystanders {its owners - Lk 19:33} were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them{[saying] the Lord has need of it - Lk 19:34}, and they gave them permission. 7 They \*brought ([historical present tense](#)) the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it. 8 And many spread their coats in the road, and others **spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields** 9 Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: "**Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!**" 11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.

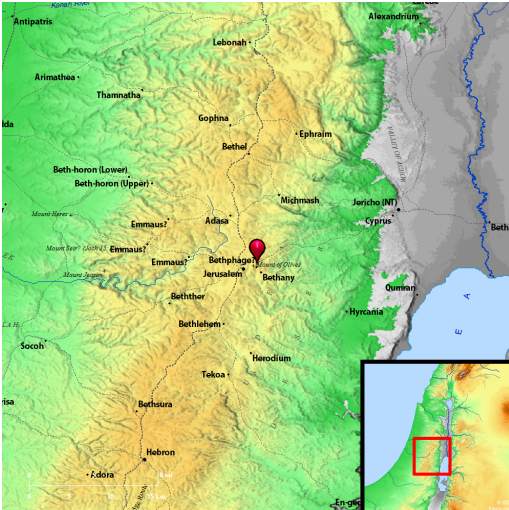
Both Bethphage and Bethany are east of Jerusalem on the other (east) side of the Mount of Olives ([picture](#)) (which is east of Jerusalem, directly opposite Temple Mount [picture](#)) and about 280 feet higher [[Mount of Olives - Wikipedia](#) = Highest point - [see picture](#) = 826 meters or 2,710 ft versus [Temple Mount - Wikipedia](#) = Highest point = 740 m 2,430 ft] separated by the Kidron Valley ([picture](#), [picture 2](#)) (John 18:1). The exact location of **Bethphage** ("house of unripe figs" but some sources actually give this as the meaning of "Bethany"! ) is not known. Most put it on the southeast side of the **Mount of Olives** and northwest of **Bethany** (beth = Hebrew for house; several meanings noted - "house of misery," "house of the poor," "house of dates," "house of Ananiah"), about 1.5 miles (3 km) east of Jerusalem. **Bethany** was two miles southeast of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho (John 11:18) and was the home of Mary, Martha and [Lazarus](#) whom Jesus had just recently prior raised from the dead (John 11:11-23, 24, 25, 26-34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45) and Jesus would stay there during the final week of His life (Mk 11:11+). (Related - [What happened to Lazarus after Jesus raised him from the dead?](#))

Bethany to Bethphage to Temple Mount  
Source: [Insights on Matthew](#)

Luke 19:29-40+ (**TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**) When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 31 "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say, 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 They said, "The Lord has need of it." 35 They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. 37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (**ED: THE REACTION OF THE PHARISEES - THEY ARE "FIT TO BE TIED" A BIT IRONIC IN THAT JESUS IS RIDING AN UNTIED COLT!** John 12:19+ ADDS "So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.") 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" 41 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

John 12:12-19+ (**TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**) On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the

King of Israel.” 14 Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, 15 “FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY’S COLT.” 16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first (**ED: THE DISCIPLES ARE CAUGHT UP IN THE FERVOR TO MAKE JESUS KING AND SURELY THOUGHT NOW HE WILL ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH. THEY WILL NOT TRULY UNDERSTAND UNTIL AFTER JESUS IS GLORIFIED**); but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him. 17 So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. 18 For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.”



Location of Bethany - About 2 Miles East of Jerusalem  
Mount of Olives is Between Bethany and Jerusalem

## JESUS ON THE "LAST LAP"

When they had approached ([eggizo](#) - drew near) **Jerusalem** and had come to **Bethphage** (only here, Mk 11:1, Lk 19:29), **at the Mount of Olives**, then Jesus sent ([apostello](#)) two disciples ([mathetes](#)) - Mark 11:1+ adds "and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives." Both Bethphage and Bethany were about two miles to the east of Jerusalem, on the other (east) side of the Mount of Olives ([picture](#)) (which is east of Jerusalem, directly opposite Temple Mount [picture](#)) and about 280 feet higher [[Mount of Olives - Wikipedia](#) = Highest point = 826 meters or 2,710 ft versus [Temple Mount - Wikipedia](#) = Highest point = 740 m 2,430 ft] separated by the Kidron Valley ([picture](#), [picture 2](#)) (John 18:1). The exact location of **Bethphage** ("house of unripe figs" but some sources actually give this as the meaning of "Bethany"!) is not known. Most put it on the southeast side of the **Mount of Olives** and northwest of **Bethany** (beth = Hebrew for house; several meanings noted - "house of misery," "house of the poor," "house of dates," "house of Ananiah"), about 1.5 miles (3 km) east of Jerusalem.

**Bethany** was two miles southeast of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho (John 11:18+) and was the home of Mary, Martha and [Lazarus](#) whom Jesus had just recently prior raised from the dead (John 11:11-45+) and Jesus would stay there during the final week of His life (Mk 11:11+). (Related - [What happened to Lazarus after Jesus raised him from the dead?](#))

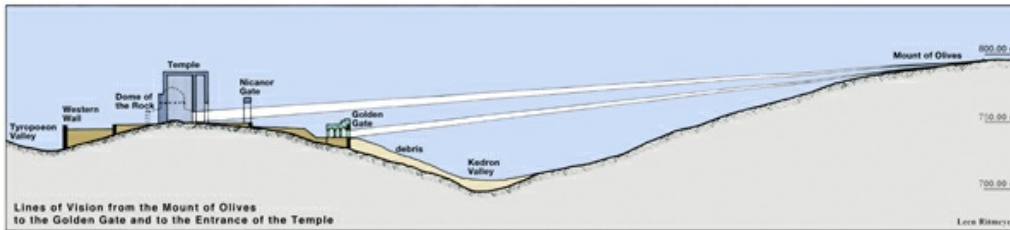
Note that at some point as Jesus approached Jerusalem, Luke's Gospel records the profound pathos felt by our Lord writing...

When He approached Jerusalem, **He saw the city and wept** (DEEP SOBBING) **over it**, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. (JESUS POINT IS THAT THE JEWS COULD HAVE KNOWN THIS DAY! SEE DISCUSSION OF THIS DAY IN COMMENTARY ON LUKE'S GOSPEL) 43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." (Lk 19:41-44+)

**Two disciples** ([mathetes](#)) - We are not told who Jesus dispatched, or "commissioned", on this mission. What is stated in the following section is that the two who were sent went in obedience even though it was surely to them somewhat of a strange order by



Jesus. There is a possible clue in Luke 22:8 (which mentions Peter and John sent on a mission) but we cannot be dogmatic.



In the depiction above imagine Bethany and Bethphage to the extreme right, east of the Mount of Olives which at 2600 ft elevation "provides an impressive, panoramic view, especially of the temple courts which lay 300' directly below. In the next few days, Jesus will make a lot of memories on this mountain. Here he will weep over Jerusalem, give the "Olivet Discourse," pray in Gethsemane, and ascend to heaven."

**Significance of city of Jerusalem** – everything in the Gospel of Mark has been targeted towards this entrance into Jerusalem – Jesus had to avoid publicity in his earlier healings and instruct people to keep quiet so he didn't draw too much attention to himself ... because he was not yet at Jerusalem for this final passion week ... but no longer; He doesn't tell Bartimaeus to be quiet; he doesn't try to hush the crowd; the time has come for open confrontation with the Jewish leaders in the city of God -- Jerusalem ([Paul Apple](#))

**Stein** - Mount of Olives lies directly east of Jerusalem 2,660 feet above sea level. To reach Jerusalem one would proceed west down the Mount of Olives, through the [Kidron Valley](#), and into the temple area through the **Eastern Gate**, later called the Golden Gate ([see picture](#)). (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Alan Carr**: Historians tell us that the population of Jerusalem was around 80,000 at this time. During the Passover, between two and three million people would crowd into the city for the celebration. The people came in anticipation; they were looking for God to do something while they were there. God would do His greatest work of all during this Passover, but most people would miss it altogether. ([Behold Thy King Cometh Unto Thee](#))

[William Barclay](#) on **Bethpage** - We know from the Jewish law that **Bethphage** was one of the circle of villages which marked the limit of a Sabbath day's journey, that is, less than a mile, while **Bethany** was one of the recognized lodging places for pilgrims to the Passover when Jerusalem was full.

**NET NOTE** - The exact location of the village of **Bethphage** is not known. Most put it on the southeast side of the Mount of Olives and northwest of Bethany, about 1.5 miles (3 km) east of Jerusalem (SEE MAP ABOVE). "Mountain" in English generally denotes a higher elevation than it often does in reference to places in Palestine. The Mount of Olives is really a ridge running north to south about 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) long, east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. Its central elevation is about 30 meters (100 ft) higher than Jerusalem. It was named for the large number of olive trees which grew on it.

Now imagine the scene - Jesus is leaving Jericho and heading toward Jerusalem which meant that soon Messiah's feet would be touching the Mount of Olives as He went up the backside of that mount and descended down the other side to begin His "**Triumphal Entry**" into Jerusalem. Jesus knew the crowd would be at a fever pitch for they were convinced He was the King who had come to establish His Kingdom and defeat the Romans. These Jews knew the Old Testament prophecies that spoke of a coming Messiah Who would establish His Kingdom, such as the prophecy in Zechariah, but did not understand the TIMING, for Zechariah 14 will be fulfilled not at His first but at His Second Coming....

In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (HIS FEET WOULD SOON TOUCH THE MOUNT!), which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south....And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one. All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security. (Zechariah 14:4, 9-11<sup>+</sup>)

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**Matthew Henry Concise - Mt 21:1-11.** This coming of Christ was described by the prophet Zechariah, Zechariah 9:9. When Christ would appear in his glory, it is in his meekness, not in his majesty, in mercy to work salvation. As meekness and outward poverty were fully seen in Zion's King, and marked his triumphal entrance to Jerusalem, how wrong covetousness, ambition, and the pride of

life must be in Zion's citizens! They brought the ass, but Jesus did not use it without the owner's consent. The trappings were such as came to hand. We must not think the clothes on our backs too dear to part with for the service of Christ. The chief priests and the elders afterwards joined with the multitude that abused him upon the cross; but none of them joined the multitude that did him honour. Those that take Christ for their King, must lay their all under his feet. Hosanna signifies, Save now, we beseech thee! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! But of how little value is the applause of the people! The changing multitude join the cry of the day, whether it be Hosanna, or Crucify him. Multitudes often seem to approve the gospel, but few become consistent disciples. When Jesus was come into Jerusalem all the city was moved; some perhaps were moved with joy, who waited for the Consolation of Israel; others, of the Pharisees, were moved with envy. So various are the motions in the minds of men upon the approach of Christ's kingdom.

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**Sent** (649) (**apostello** from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off, to send forth, to send out. To send out; to commission as a representative, an ambassador, an envoy. The idea is to send forth from one place to another. But the meaning of **apostello** is more than just to send because it means "to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished" (Wuest) To send upon some business (Mt. 2:16; 10:5; 20:2). To send away in the sense of to dismiss (Mk 12:3, 4). To send or thrust forth as a sickle among corn (Mk 4:29). Uses in Mark - Mk. 1:2; Mk. 3:14; Mk. 3:31; Mk. 4:29; Mk. 5:10; Mk. 6:7; Mk. 6:17; Mk. 6:27; Mk. 8:26; Mk. 9:37; Mk. 11:1; Mk. 11:3; Mk. 12:2; Mk. 12:3; Mk. 12:4; Mk. 12:5; Mk. 12:6; Mk. 12:13; Mk. 13:27; Mk. 14:13

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#### QUESTION - [What is Palm Sunday? WATCH VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate the [triumphal entry](#) of Jesus into Jerusalem, one week before His resurrection (Matthew 21:1–11). As Jesus entered the holy city, He neared the culmination of a long journey toward Golgotha. He had come to save the lost (Luke 19:10), and now was the time—this was the place—to secure that salvation. Palm Sunday marked the start of what is often called "[Passion Week](#)," the final seven days of Jesus' earthly ministry. Palm Sunday was the "beginning of the end" of Jesus' work on earth.

Palm Sunday began with Jesus and His disciples traveling over the [Mount of Olives](#). The Lord sent two disciples ahead into the village of Bethphage to find an animal to ride. They found the unbroken colt of a donkey, just as Jesus had said they would (Luke 19:29–30). When they untied the colt, the owners began to question them. The disciples responded with the answer Jesus had provided: "The Lord needs it" (Luke 19:31–34). Amazingly, the owners were satisfied with that answer and let the disciples go. "They brought [the donkey] to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it" (Luke 19:35).

As Jesus ascended toward Jerusalem, a large multitude gathered around Him. This crowd understood that Jesus was the Messiah; what they did not understand was that it wasn't time to set up the kingdom yet—although Jesus had tried to tell them so (Luke 19:11–12). The crowd's actions along the road give rise to the name "Palm Sunday": "A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road" (Matthew 21:8). In strewing their cloaks on the road, the people were giving Jesus the royal treatment—King Jehu was given similar honor at his coronation (2 Kings 9:13). John records the detail that the branches they cut were from palm trees (John 12:13).

On that first Palm Sunday, the people also honored Jesus verbally: "The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' / 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' / 'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'" (Matthew 21:9). In their praise of Jesus, the Jewish crowds were quoting Psalm 118:25–26, an acknowledged prophecy of the Christ. The allusion to a Messianic psalm drew resentment from the religious leaders present: "Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!'" (Luke 19:39). However, Jesus saw no need to rebuke those who told the truth. He replied, "I tell you . . . if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:40).

Some 450 to 500 years prior to Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, the prophet Zechariah had prophesied the event we now call Palm Sunday: "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! / Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! / See, your king comes to you, / righteous and victorious, / lowly and riding on a donkey, / on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). The prophecy was fulfilled in every particular, and it was indeed a time of rejoicing, as Jerusalem welcomed their King. Unfortunately, the celebration was not to last. The crowds looked for a Messiah who would rescue them *politically* and free them *nationally*, but Jesus had come to save them *spiritually*. First things first, and mankind's primary need is spiritual, not political, cultural, or national salvation.

Even as the coatless multitudes waved the palm branches and shouted for joy, they missed the true reason for Jesus' presence. They could neither see nor understand the cross. That's why, "as [Jesus] approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies . . . will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you'" (Luke 19:41–47). It is a tragic thing to see the Savior but not recognize Him for who He is. The crowds who were

crying out "[Hosanna!](#)" on Palm Sunday were crying out "Crucify Him!" later that week (Matthew 27:22–23).

There is coming a day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10–11). The worship will be real then. Also, John records a scene in heaven that features the eternal celebration of the risen Lord: "There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were *holding palm branches in their hands*" (Revelation 7:9, emphasis added). These palm-bearing saints will shout, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (verse 10), and who can measure sum of their joy?

#### **Palm Sunday Calendar:**

2024 — March 24

2025 — April 13

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#### **Question - [What is the significance of Bethany in the Bible?](#)**

**Answer:** Bethany was a village in Judea about two miles east of Jerusalem (John 11:18), a distance considered a "Sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:12). Bethany was situated on the well-traveled road to Jericho. Some scholars think Bethany was more like a modern subdivision or a neighborhood rather than an entire town. The edges of Bethany reached to the [Mount of Olives](#) and also bordered Bethphage, a suburb of Jerusalem.

Bethany is probably best known for being the hometown of Jesus' good friends, Mary, Martha, and [Lazarus](#). Bethany was the place where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1, 41–44), it was the home of Simon the leper (Mark 14:3–10), and it was the place where Mary [anointed Jesus' feet](#) with perfume (Matthew 26:6–13). Other references to Bethany are Mark 11:1 and Luke 19:29, which describe the preparations for Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the cursing of the fig tree in Mark 11:11–13, and the place where Jesus stayed overnight during His final week of earthly ministry, between His triumphal entry and His crucifixion (Matthew 21:17).

The name *Bethany* is translated by some to mean "house of figs," as there are many fig trees and palms in the area; others translate it as "house of misery," speculating that Bethany was a designated place for the sick and those with contagious diseases.

Bethany is also significant as the place near which Christ ascended back into heaven (Luke 24:50). Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus gathered His eleven disciples to give them final instructions before He left the earth (Luke 24:50–51). He took them to the Mount of Olives, in "the vicinity of Bethany" (verse 50), where He blessed them and commissioned them. The Lord was then lifted up into the clouds (Acts 1:9). As the disciples stood staring upwards, two angels appeared to them and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

*When Jesus returns to set up His kingdom,  
it will be to the very place He left: the Mount of Olives near Bethany.*

Bethany has an exciting future prophesied. Zechariah 14:4 says, "On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east." When Jesus returns to set up His kingdom, it will be to the very place He left: the Mount of Olives near Bethany. Though the ancient town of Bethany may have been small and seemingly insignificant, it will be the scene of a world-changing event: the glorious return of Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:11–16). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

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**Danny Akin on the Mount of Olives** - We should also take note, without running past it too quickly, of the importance of the Mount of Olives (v. 1) in biblical and redemptive history. – The **Mount of Olives** is a ridge about two and a half miles long. It rises to a height about 2700 feet, 200 feet higher than Mount Zion. The view from its summit is breath-taking. Its crest is less than a mile directly east of Jerusalem. It is known for its many olive trees. Significant historical events:

1. Its slopes were the path of David's retreat from Jerusalem to escape capture by Absalom (2 Sam 15:30-32).
2. On this mount Solomon grieved God by erecting idols for his foreign wives to worship (1 Kings 11:1-10).
3. On this mount Jesus wept over the disobedience and blindness of Jerusalem (Lk 19:41-44).
4. Ezekiel witnessed the Glory of God on the Mount of Olives (Eze. 11:23).
5. Jesus, the Son of David made his royal entry into Jerusalem from here. (Mk 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40; Matt 21:1-10; John 12:12-13).
6. The disciples witnessed Jesus' ascension into glory on this mount (Lk 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-12).
7. In Acts 1:10-11 Jesus said He would come again in the same way you have watched him go. Zechariah 14:4-5 tells us what

will happen when those holy feet touch down once again where He left, "On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him."

**Matthew 21:2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me.**

- Mt 26:18 Mk 11:2-3 14:13-16 Lu 19:30-32 Joh 2:5-8

#### Related Passage:

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Mark 11:2-3+ and \*said ([historical present tense](#)) to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 3 "If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here."

Luke 19:30-32+ saying, "Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 31 "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say, 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them.

saying to them, "Go ([present imperative](#)) into the village opposite you, and immediately ([euthus](#)) you will find a donkey ([onos](#)) tied there and a colt ([polos](#)) with her; untie ([luo](#)) them and bring ([aorist imperative](#)) them to Me Don't get confused. The donkey is called a colt in Mk 11:2+ and it is one "on which no one yet has ever sat." That means it is not yet "broken in" for riding. Go is a command in the [present imperative](#) which they promptly obey. While they may not fully understand why they are being sent on this errand for Jesus, they do not question Him. John 12:16+ says "These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him."

**THOUGHT-** When Jesus tells us to "Go" through His Word and Spirit and prayer, then we need to heed without hesitation, doubt or questioning. Like these first disciples we may not fully understand in this life why we are to go (cf Jn 12:16), "for now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1 Cor 13:12+).

**Henry Morris - colt with her.** The parallel accounts in Mark 11:2 and Luke 19:30 mention only one donkey, but that does not mean they deny that two were involved. Also, Matthew is the only one who mentions that this incident was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, although the others must have known this reference. ([Defender's Study Bible Note - Matthew 21](#))

**J. Blenkinsopp** suggests that the act of untying the colt would have Messianic significance based on the Oracle of Judah (Gen 49:10–11), ("The Oracle of Judah and the Messianic Entry," JBL 80 [1961]: 55–64).

**Mark Moore** - Matthew mentions that they actually bring two animals. Mark explains why. The colt has never been ridden. (Oxen, donkeys, and colts that had never been ridden were sometimes used for sacred purposes -- Nu 19:2; Dt 21:3; 1Sa 6:7). If Jesus is going to keep from getting thrown off, they had better bring the colt's mother along to calm its nerves, especially in the midst of this raucous crowd (**ED:** I MIGHT REBUT THIS COMMENT BY SUGGESTING I DOUBT SERIOUSLY IF THE CREATOR WOULD EVER BE "THROWN OFF" BY ONE OF HIS CREATURES!). (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos or book format](#))

Regarding **the donkey tied there and a colt** according to **J.D.M. Derrett**, "Law in the New Testament: The Palm Sunday Colt," NovT 13 (1971): 241–258, the state could sequester animals from the general public for its own use. 1 Sam 8:17 gives OT support for this practice (cf. m. B. Mesia 6:1). Jesus, as David's descendant and Messiah, certainly had this right! Furthermore, rabbis also had this right under certain circumstances. However, unlike the state, Jesus seeks permission to use the animal and promises to return it. Thus the Apostles seem to submit to the legal responsibilities of borrowing an animal from Exod 22:14–15.

As **Akin** says "From the moment He enters Jerusalem the prerogatives of deity are present. Jesus is Lord and Master of every detail of His divine destiny. He knows what will happen and when it will happen. It will all go according to plan."



**THOUGHT** - Jesus' omniscience and absolute control extend to every detail of our lives, yea, even every hair of our head (Mt 10:30,31+), so why should we worry, fret or be anxious (Beloved, I am speaking to myself on this one!)" Play [God is in Control by Twila Paris](#). (Related topics- The Providence of God and [God is In Control](#))

*We worship a Lord Who is ever  
in complete control of every situation!*

**Brian Bell** - His Going Public: He was purposely *going public*. He was promoting a public demonstration. Never before. He had repeatedly withdrawn from the crowds. But now He invited it. He courted danger & did it with calculated purpose. Jesus was demonstrating His omniscience/His all-knowingness. He was in control of the whole situation. I like that. That brings me comfort today. He has all the details of my life figured out. (AND) We can all find encouragement from the fact that Jesus enlisted the donkey in His service!

**Alan Carr** asks "How did Jesus know this (**ED: DONKEY TIED AND COLT WITH HER**)? Some writers suggest that Jesus had already been to the owners of this little donkey and arranged for the use of the animal. They believe Jesus set this up before hand. I suppose they believe Jesus set things up with that fish that Peter caught with the tax money in its mouth, Matt. 17:27. Well, He did set it up, but not physically. He set it up in His sovereignty! These events remind us that Jesus is God and that He is in control of all things, Eph. 1:11; Isa. 46:10-11! That encourages me! So, these verses prove that Jesus is God! Which two disciples went after the donkey? The Bible doesn't say! You see, it doesn't matter who does what as long as the Lord is glorified! I wonder if those two men complained about their assignment. If they were Baptists they did. I can hear them now, "Can you believe this? After all we've done for Him; Jesus picked us for this dirty assignment." They didn't realize that they were the instruments He would use to fulfill prophecy. They were doing something far bigger than they could see. We usually are! When we are involved in the Lord's work, we are involved in big business!

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**C H Spurgeon** - The time was come for our Lord to finish his great work on earth, and his going up to Jerusalem was with this intent. He now determines to enter his capital city openly, and there to reveal himself as King. To this end, when he came near to the city, Jesus sent two disciples to bring him the foal of an ass whereon he should ride. His orders to the two disciples whom he come to Bethphage, are worthy of our serious attention. He directed them to the place where they should find the animal: "**Go into the village over against you** ." The Lord knows where that which he requires is to be found. Perhaps it is nearer to us than we dream: "**over against out**" He told them that they would not have to search: "**straightway ye shall find** ." When the Lord sends us on an errand, he will speed us on our way. He described the condition of the creatures: "**an ass tied, and a colt with her** ." Our Lord knows the position of every animal in the world, and he counts no circumstance to be beneath his office. Nor did he leave the disciples without orders how they were to proceed: "**loose them, and bring them** ." Demur and debate there would be none; they might act at once. To stand questioning is not for the messengers of our King: it is their duty to obey their Lord's orders, and to fear nothing. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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### **The Donkey,** *G.K.Chesterton*

When fishes flew and forests  
walked And figs grew upon thorn,  
Some moment when the moon was blood  
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry  
And ears like errant wings,  
The devil's walking parody  
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
Of ancient crooked will;  
Starve, scourge, deride me:  
I am dumb, I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;  
One far fierce hour and sweet:  
There was a shout about my ears,  
And palms before my feet.

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**Colt** (4454) (**polos**) is a young animal, a foal, the young of the horse or donkey colt, foal. It refers to an animal that is old enough to use. In the NT a donkey's colt young donkey for Matthew says "a donkey tied there and a **colt** with her." (Mt 21:2). John 12:16 says "a donkey's **colt**." **BDAG** says **polos** can then refer to "any 'young animal' [Aristot. et al.], the term being applied to any young animal born of its kind, from an elephant to a locust, depending on context." Gilbrant says in Classical Greek "The word *pōlos* occurs in classical Greek as early as Homer (Eighth Century B.C.) and appears on inscriptions and in papyrus documents of the New Testament world. In most cases it denotes the colt of a horse. Standing alone, the word does not indicate whether the animal is male or female. It is also used in the Septuagint where it usually translates 'ayir, "the stallion of an ass.'"

**Polos** - 12x in 11v - Matt. 21:2; Matt. 21:5; Matt. 21:7; Mk. 11:2; Mk. 11:4; Mk. 11:5; Mk. 11:7; Lk. 19:30; Lk. 19:33; Lk. 19:35; Jn. 12:15

**Polos** in Septuagint - Gen. 32:15; Gen. 49:11; Jdg. 10:4; Jdg. 12:14; Prov. 5:19; Zech. 9:9; Most of these OT uses refer to a donkey.

**Untie** (loose, untie, unbind) (3089) (**luo**) means to loose, release, dissolve. The basic meaning is **to loose** that which is fastened or bound and thus to unbind or untie. **Literally** to untie something (colt = Mt 21:2, = Mk 1:7<sup>+</sup>, Lk 3:16<sup>+</sup>, Jn 1:27<sup>+</sup> = sandal thong, man [Lazarus] wrapped in bandages = Jn 11:44 = "Unbind him, and let him go."), break the seals of a scroll (Re 5:2 - secular use described "broken seals of a will", or "of the opening of a document" or "a letter"), release from prison (Ac 22:30<sup>+</sup> cp release of angels and/or the devil = Re 9:14,15<sup>+</sup>, Rev 20:3, 7<sup>+</sup>).

**Matthew 21:3 "If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."**

- **The Lord** (**kurios**): 1Ch 29:14-16 Ps 24:1 50:10,11 Hag 2:8,9 Joh 3:35 Jn 17:2 Ac 17:25 2Co 8:9
- **immediately**: 1Sa 10:26 1Ki 17:9 Ezr 1:1,5 7:27 2Co 8:1,2,16 Jas 1:17

## THE LORD IN FULL CONTROL

**If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord (**kurios**) has need of them,' and immediately (**euthus**) he (the owner) will send (**apostello**) them** - Don't miss that Jesus here refers to Himself as **The Lord**! This is the **denouement** in this great drama of redemption, so Jesus no longer holds back on revealing Who He is! Jesus is in full control of the details in sovereignly orchestrating His final entry to Jerusalem perfectly in keeping with Zechariah's prophecy (Zech 9:9). It is interesting that the Lord needed anything, but in taking the form of man He subjected Himself to human needs. In this case He needs a donkey to ride.

**Brian Bell** - The Lord had need of it & He has need of you. Like Philip & the Ethiopian Eunuch. The Lord had need of Philip. In His sovereignty & grace God has given you & me the privilege of being used to tell other people about the Lord. Riding a donkey was a kingly act which identified Him with the royal line of David. It was a royal animal during King David's reign. After him, the Hebrew kings switched to horses, & the donkey was considered unsuited to the dignity of Kings.

**NET NOTE** - The custom called *angaria* allowed the impressment of animals for service to a significant figure.

**THOUGHT** - Jesus' **omniscience** and absolute control extend to every detail of our lives, yea, even every hair of our head (Mt 10:30,31<sup>+</sup>), so why should we worry, fret or be anxious (Beloved, I am speaking to myself on this one!)" Play **God is in Control by Twila Paris**. (Related topics- **The Providence of God** and **God is In Control**)

We worship a Lord Who is ever in complete control of every situation!

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**C H Spurgeon** - The two animals would be willingly yielded up by their owner when the disciples said, "The Lord hath need of them;" nay, he would not only give them up, but "straightway he will send them." Either the owner was himself a secret disciple, or some awe of the Lord Jesus was on his mind; but he would right joyfully consent to lend the ass and its foal for the purpose for which they were required. What a singular conjunction of words is here, "**the Lord**" and "**hath need**!"

Jesus, without laying aside his sovereignty, had taken a nature full of needs; yet, being in need, he was still the Lord, and could command his subjects, and requisition their property. Whenever we have anything of which the Lord's cause has need, how cheerfully should we hand it over to him! The owner of the ass and her colt regarded it as an honor to furnish Jesus with a creature to ride upon. How great is the power of Jesus over human minds, so that by a word he quietly moves them to do his bidding!

We have here the record of two disciples being sent to fetch an ass: those who do little things for Jesus are honored thereby. Their

errand appeared strange, for what they did might seem like robbery; but he who sent them took care to protect them from the least shade of suspicion. The messengers raised no question, offered no objection, and met with no difficulty. It is ours to do what Jesus bids us, just as he bids us, and because he bids us; for his command is our authority. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Lord** (master, owner)([2962](#))([kurios](#) from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership rights and uncontested power. *Kurios* is used some 489 times of Jesus. Jesus is referred to as **Lord** (*Kurios*) more frequently than by any other title. Therefore it behooves us to understand the truth concerning **Jesus as Lord** and not allow ourselves to become side-tracked in debate over so-called "[Lordship salvation](#)". The indisputable Biblical facts are that faith in Jesus saves and Jesus is Lord (Ro 10:9,10<sup>+</sup>) This confession of "Jesus is Lord" became a direct affront to the practice of Roman [emperor worship](#). Certain cities even built temples for Caesar-worship as was the case in [Smyrna](#) where the command was to honor the emperor by confessing "Caesar is Lord". To declare "Jesus is Lord" became a crime punishable by death, resulting in the martyrdom. I think the first century believers understood "Lordship" in a way modern believers would find it difficult to comprehend! (cp Jesus' "prophetic" warning in Mt 10:22, 23, 24, 25<sup>+</sup> where "master" is *kurios*)

**James Montgomery Boice** adds that "Citizens of the (Roman) empire were required to burn a pinch of incense to the reigning Caesar and utter the words *Kyrios Kaisar* ("Caesar is Lord!"). It is this that the early Christians refused to do and for which they were themselves thrown to the wild lions or crucified. It was not that Christians were forbidden to worship God. They were free to worship any god they chose so long as they also acknowledged Caesar. Romans were tolerant. But when Christians denied to Caesar the allegiance that they believed belonged to the true God only, they were executed. (See Boice's [Daniel: An Expository Commentary- Page 69](#))

**Wayne Detzler** writes that ***kurios*** - In the earliest Greek this word meant "to have power or authority." Later it came to describe one who is in control. As classical Greek developed, it became a title for men of importance. Since the gods of ancient Greece were neither creators nor lords of their fate, pagan deities were not called "lord" until much later. By the time of Christ, kings had come to be called "lord." This was true of the Roman Emperor Caligula (A.D. 37-41). It was also true of Candace, the fabled queen of upper Egypt (Ac 8:27). So too Herod the Great, Herod Agrippa I, and Herod Agrippa II were called "lord." (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#))

*Kurios* in Matthew's Gospel - Matt. 1:20; Matt. 1:22; Matt. 1:24; Matt. 2:13; Matt. 2:15; Matt. 2:19; Matt. 3:3; Matt. 4:7; Matt. 4:10; Matt. 5:33; Matt. 6:24; Matt. 7:21; Matt. 7:22; Matt. 8:2; Matt. 8:6; Matt. 8:8; Matt. 8:21; Matt. 8:25; Matt. 9:28; Matt. 9:38; Matt. 10:24; Matt. 10:25; Matt. 11:25; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 13:27; Matt. 14:28; Matt. 14:30; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 15:25; Matt. 15:27; Matt. 16:22; Matt. 17:4; Matt. 17:15; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 18:25; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 18:31; Matt. 18:32; Matt. 18:34; Matt. 20:8; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31; Matt. 20:33; Matt. 21:3; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 21:30; Matt. 21:40; Matt. 21:42; Matt. 22:37; Matt. 22:43; Matt. 22:44; Matt. 22:45; Matt. 23:39; Matt. 24:42; Matt. 24:45; Matt. 24:46; Matt. 24:48; Matt. 24:50; Matt. 25:11; Matt. 25:18; Matt. 25:19; Matt. 25:20; Matt. 25:21; Matt. 25:22; Matt. 25:23; Matt. 25:24; Matt. 25:26; Matt. 25:37; Matt. 25:44; Matt. 26:22; Matt. 27:10; Matt. 27:63; Matt. 28:2;

**Send** ([649](#)) **apostello** from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off, to send forth, to send out. To send out; to commission as a representative, an ambassador, an envoy. The idea is to send forth from one place to another. But the meaning of *apostello* is more than just to send because it means "to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished" (Wuest) To send upon some business (Mt. 2:16; 10:5; 20:2). To send away in the sense of to dismiss (Mk 12:3, 4). To send or thrust forth as a sickle among corn (Mk 4:29). **Apostello** summarized - 1. send someone out, implying for a particular purpose (Mk 1:11; 1Co 1:17); 2. send a message, send word (Ac 28:28, Mt 14:35, Mt 27:19); 3. (*apostellō* to drepanon), begin to harvest, place the sickle (Mk 4:29) (**Ed**: literally "send the sickle" = begin to harvest)

**Apostello in Matthew** - Matt. 2:16; Matt. 8:31; Matt. 10:5; Matt. 10:16; Matt. 10:40; Matt. 11:10; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 14:35; Matt. 15:24; Matt. 20:2; Matt. 21:1; Matt. 21:3; Matt. 21:34; Matt. 21:36; Matt. 21:37; Matt. 22:3; Matt. 22:4; Matt. 22:16; Matt. 23:34; Matt. 23:37; Matt. 24:31; Matt. 27:19

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**Alan Carr** - One of the most amazing statements in the Bible is found here in verse three in verse 3, and it has to do with that little beast. It says, "The Lord hath need of him." When did God ever "need" anything? Here is what God had to say about His Own needs, Psa. 50:9-12. But, that was the paradox of our Lord's earthly life. He was rich, yet He became poor, 2 Cor. 8:9.

-He owned all things, yet He possessed nothing. He created the stars, yet He had nowhere to lay His Own head, Matt. 8:20.

-He fashioned everything there is out of nothing, yet He had to borrow a boat from which to preach His Gospel.

-He created every drop of water that exists in the world, yet He cried "I thirst" as He was dying on the cross, John 19:28.

-He created every tree, but He died on a borrowed cross.

- He created every rock, but He had to borrow a tomb in which to be buried.
- He used the clouds as His chariots, Psa. 104:3, yet He had to borrow a donkey on which to ride.
- That is the paradox of His life!
- He was rich, yet made Himself poor so that those who believe on Him might enjoy His riches!

The Lord could save sinners and accomplish His work on earth just fine without us. Yet, He chooses to use frail, human instruments for His glory. When we are like that donkey, Redeemed, Released and Ruled, He can use us too. Being a little donkey isn't so bad when Jesus is your Master. Look at what that donkey did. He got to carry the King of Glory into Jerusalem. The Lord used Him as His vehicle to get glory to His name. That's what He wants to do with you and me! Let's yield to Him and let Him rule us as He sees fit. By the way, when that little Redeemed, Released, Ruled donkey walked by with Jesus on his back, nobody saw the donkey! All eyes were on the Lord Jesus. That's how it should be all time. If the Lord has spoken to you on any level through this message, you need to respond to Him. There are some here that need to be Redeemed. You need to come to Jesus. There are some here that need to be Released. Sins and the flesh hold you captive. Come to Jesus, He specialized in delivering the captives, Luke 4:18. There are some here that need to be Ruled. You need to submit to the Lordship of Jesus in your life. When you do, you will have no trouble submitting to the authorities the Lord has placed in your life. If Jesus has spoken to you on any level, you need to hear Him and heed Him today. Will you do that right now?

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## Wanted!

Read: Luke 19:29-40

The Lord has need of him. —Luke 19:34

As Jesus approached Jerusalem for the last time, He sent two disciples into the city to bring Him a donkey. He told them, "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing it?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it'" (Luke 19:31).

As we approach our sunset years, we may ask ourselves, "Can I still be useful to God? Is there some service I can render that will fill my days with significance? Am I needed?"

Of course you are! God needs you just as He needed the donkey to carry Him through the streets of Jerusalem. He has always needed something or someone to get His work done. He still has useful work for you to do.

Perhaps your work will be one brief task, like the donkey's single act of service. Or it may be some activity that will fully occupy your years until your Master calls you home. It may be an opportunity to share your faith with someone, to intercede for him, or to love him through quiet acts of mercy, friendly visits, or to extend some small courtesy. There will always be something for you to do.

In the meantime, you and I must stand and wait, preparing ourselves through prayer, Bible reading, and quiet listening—ready for the moment that our Lord has need of us.

Will you be ready when He needs you?

God has work for all His children, regardless of age or ability.

By David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## F B Meyer - They said, The Lord hath need of him.

Oh, could I hear Thee say as much of me, my blessed Lord! Here, where two ways meet, I have been standing long, waiting for a purpose worthy to fill my soul, and task the powers that are, as yet, only in the first burst of young life.

**Thou needest much and many in thy great redemptive work.** The boat to cross the lake; the line to catch the fish; the bread and fish to feed the crowds; the baskets to gather up the fragments; the chalice to hold the wine; the dish to hold the sop; the little child to be the text for thy sermon; the clay for the blind man's eyes; the tender women to minister of their substance; the apostles to preach thy Gospel. Canst Thou not find a niche for me also?

**Thou requirest undivided loyalty.** — Born of the Virgin's womb, laid in death where man's dust had never come, Thou must have a colt on which none had ever sat. I cannot give Thee a heart which has never known another; but I profess to Thee that there is no rival now. Thou mayest have all. Thine is the Kingdom.

**Thou requirest patience and humility.** — But these, also, Thou hast taught. I have waited patiently till this glad hour, and am quieted and humbled like a weaned child. No longer do I seek great things for myself. It is enough for me to be and do anything, if

only Thou shalt be glorified.

**Thou requirest, perhaps, but one brief service.** — To serve Thee always with increasing fervour would be my choice; but if Thou needest only one brief, glad hour of ministry, like that the good Ananias did to thy Church when he ministered to Saul, then be it so. To prepare for it, and revert to it, would be my satisfaction in having lived.

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## Let It Go

Say, "The Lord has need of it," and immediately he will send it here. — Mark 11:3

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:1-11

Many years ago, when a young friend asked if he could borrow our car, my wife and I were hesitant at first. It was our car. We owned it, and we depended on it. But we soon felt convicted to share it with him because we knew that God wanted us to care for others. So we handed the keys over to him, and he traveled to a church 30 miles away to conduct a youth rally. The meeting was used by the Lord to bring teens to Christ.

Jesus instructed His disciples to take another man's donkey. The Son of God told His men to "loose it and bring it" to Him [Mark 11:2](#). If someone objected, they were to say, "The Lord has need of it," and they would then be permitted to lead it away. That donkey carried Christ into Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday.

There's a lesson here for us to consider. We all have things that we hold dear. We may have thought, I could never part with that. It may be a new truck, a coat, some other possession, or our precious few free hours during the week. Will we be open to give when someone obviously needs something we have?

If you sense that the Spirit is speaking to you, let your time or possession go, as the owner released his animal to Jesus. He will then be glorified as He deserves! By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Make me a channel of blessing today,  
Make me a channel of blessing, I pray;  
My life possessing, my service blessing,  
Make me a channel of blessing today.  
—Smyth

God gives us all we need, so we can give to others in their need.

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## God Needs You!

If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord has need of it." —Mark 11:3

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:1-7

For His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus chose a donkey to serve as His royal transportation. His disciples were instructed to say, "The Lord has need of it" (Mark 11:3). Isn't it astounding that the Son of God should use such lowly means to accomplish His purposes? Alexander MacLaren commented on this: "Christ comes to us in like fashion, and brushes aside all our convenient excuses. He says, 'I want you, and that is enough.' "

Think of it! The Creator of the universe needs us and desires to fit us into His eternal design! Though all-powerful and not dependent on any creature, He has chosen to carry out His plans through lowly human instruments. If this were not so, He would have taken us to heaven as soon as He saved us by His grace.

Someone once asked Francis of Assisi how he was able to accomplish so much. He replied, "This may be why: The Lord looked down from heaven and said, 'Where can I find the weakest, littlest man on earth?' Then He saw me and said, 'I've found him. I will work through him, and he won't be proud of it. He'll see that I am only using him because of his insignificance.' "

You may be small in your own eyes, but God has need of you! By: Paul Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Yours is a mission you alone can fill,  
Whether it be to build or teach or till;  
Your goal may still be hidden from your view,  
But somewhere God has urgent need of you.



God is looking for ordinary people for extraordinary work.

**Matthew 21:4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:**

- **this:** Mt 1:22 26:56 Joh 19:36,37
- **spoken through the prophet:** Zec 9:9 Joh 12:15

## **ZECHARIAH 9:9 FULFILLED**

**This** - What is "**this**?" In context this seems to allude primarily to the procurement of the donkey without any difficulties. But it also seems to point to the following prophetic passage.

**Took place** (purpose clause - [hina](#) - in order) **to fulfill** ([pleroo](#)) **what was spoken through the prophet** ([prophetes](#)) - The prophet Zechariah is quoted in the next verse. In this section it is fascinating in that we see a mixture of the attributes of Jesus coming into play as the drama of redemption crescendos - His dominion, power and authority (riding an unbroken colt, cleansing temple), His omniscience (details of colt), His humility (to ride in on a donkey)

**Mark Moore** - The book of Zechariah predicts the Messiah with astounding clarity. (Especially Zech 9:9; 11:13; 12:10; 13:7; 14:4.) This passage in particular was interpreted by many rabbis as Messianic. Matthew shows how this triumphal entry fulfills Zechariah 9:9. (The introductory phrase is actually closer to Isa 62:11, "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you.'" Since the context of Isa 62:11 is also appropriate to our passages, Matthew may intend for us to see a connection.) He also shows, however, that although Jesus is the Messiah predicted by the prophets, he is not the Messiah expected by the people. They were looking for the king to ride into Jerusalem ([Borrow Tenney](#) who notes that **Daughter of Zion** is "a personification of the city of Jerusalem" in the OT, especially in the latter prophets (Isa 1:8; 52:2; 62:11; Jer 4:31; 6:23; Lam 2:4, 8, 10, 13; Mic 4:8; Zeph 3:14; Zech 2:10).) on a war horse (cf. Rev 6:4; 19:11). What they were promised was a **Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6) riding on a donkey—a symbol of kings and of peace** (Judg 5:10; 1 Kgs 1:33; b. Ber. 56b).<sup>11</sup> This kind of use of prophecy will continue to the end of the Gospels. **Although we have already become accustomed to Jesus fulfilling prophecy throughout the Gospels, we will be overwhelmed by how much Jesus fulfills in this last week. Most of it will convey this same message: Jesus is the Messiah predicted by the prophets, but not the Messiah expected by the people.** (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this resource highly recommended available in Logos or book format)

**Matthew 21:5 "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'"**

- **the daughter:** Ps 9:14 Isa 12:6 40:9 62:11 Zep 3:14,15 Mk 11:4-11
- **King:** Mt 2:2,6 Ge 49:10 Nu 24:19 Ps 2:6-12 45:1-17 72:1-20 Ps 110:1-4 Isa 9:6,7 Jer 23:5,6 Eze 34:24 37:24 Da 2:44-45 Da 7:13-14 Mic 5:2 Zec 6:12-13 Joh 1:49 19:15-22
- **gentle:** Mt 11:29 12:19,20 2Co 10:1 Php 2:3-5
- **mounted:** De 17:16 Judges 5:10 12:14 2Sa 16:2 1Ki 1:33 10:26 Ho 1:7 Mic 5:10,11 Zec 9:9-10

### **Related Passages:**

Zechariah 9:9-10 (See also [discussion below](#).) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! **Behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)), your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; (PROPHECY OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM) And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

Isaiah 62:11 (**NOTE 3X THE SPIRIT IS CALLING THE READER TO PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THIS VERSE!**) **Behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)), the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the **daughter of Zion**, "**Lo** ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)), your salvation comes; **Behold** ([hinneh](#)) His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him."

Genesis 49:8-12 (**JACOB'S MESSIANIC PROPHECY OF A KING OVER ALL THE PEOPLES/NATIONS**)  
Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. 9 "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? 10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. 11 "He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. 12 "His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk.

Mark 11:4-7+ They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they \*untied ([historical present tense](#)) it. 5 Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission. 7 They \*brought([historical present tense](#)) the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it. (**Note** that Mark does not quote Zechariah's prophecy. A gentile audience would not have been familiar with that OT book.)

## **ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY MESSIAH RIDING ON DONKEY**

**SAY TO THE DAUGHTER** ([thugater](#)) **OF ZION** - This is a figurative description, not of a woman (a daughter), but of the nation of Israel. It is interesting that in the OT, Israel was referred to as the "wife of Jehovah" (Isa 54:5-6, Jer 31:32+) (See study [Israel The Wife of Jehovah](#))

**BEHOLD** ([idou](#)) - This is a command for Israel to give full attention to the following description, for it is a quote that fulfills [Messianic Prophecy](#) and specifically indicates that Jesus is the long expected Messiah now entering Jerusalem! (See [Messianic Prophecies](#))

**YOUR** (Israel's) **KING** ([basileus](#)) **IS COMING** ([erchomai](#) - present tense) **TO YOU, GENTLE** ([praus](#)), **AND MOUNTED** ([epibaino](#)) **ON A DONKEY**, (onos) **EVEN ON A COLT** ([polos](#)), **THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN** - Notice the words are in all caps which in the NAS version signifies a direct Old Testament quote (this tool not used in any other Bible version). See also [discussion below](#). Note that this is the first time that Jesus publicly and openly presented Himself to the Jews as their promised Messiah and King. He knew that had He done it earlier, they would have attempted to make Him King. But Jesus' way of obtaining a crown was first to experience the cross!

His first coming would be **gentle** and on a **donkey** which dramatically contrasts with His **Second Coming** as a victorious Warrior and King of kings, riding on a white horse to conquer all His enemies (Rev 19:11-21+, see also return of Jesus the Stone in Da 2:44-45+).

Jesus had described Himself as **gentle** in His great invitation to Israel (and to all lost people) in Mt 11:28-30+

**Come** (command see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 **Take** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for **I am gentle** ([praus](#)) and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

**NET NOTE** - Greek "Tell the daughter of Zion" (the phrase "[daughter of Zion](#)" is an idiom for the inhabitants of Jerusalem: "people of Zion"). The idiom "daughter of Zion" has been translated as "people of Zion" because the original idiom, while firmly embedded in the Christian tradition, is not understandable to most modern English readers. Grk **"the foal of an animal under the yoke,"** i.e., a hard-working animal. This is a quotation from Zech 9:9.

**C H Spurgeon** - Matthew is always reminding us of the Old Testament; as well, indeed, he may, for our Lord is always fulfilling it. Every point of detail is according to prophetic model: All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. The Old and New Testaments dovetail into each other. Men have written "Harmonies of the Gospels"; but God has given us a Harmony of the Old and New Testament. The passage referred to is in Zechariah 9:9. It represents Zion's King as meek and lowly even in the hour of his triumphant entrance into his metropolis, riding, not upon a war-horse, but upon a young ass, whereon no man had sat. He had before said of himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart," and now he gives one more proof of the truth of his own words; and, at the same time, of the fulfillment of prophecy: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass." He did not, like Solomon, fetch horses out of Egypt to minister to his pride; but he who was greater than Solomon was content with a colt the foal of an ass, and even that humble creature was borrowed, for he had none of his own. The tenderness of Jesus comes out in the fact of his having the ass brought with her foal that they might not be parted. He was, as a King, all gentleness and mercy: his grandeur involved no pain, even for the meanest living thing. How blessed is it for us to be ruled by such a King! ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Behold** (2400) **idou** is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **Idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aurist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" The idea is "Lo and behold!", serving to call attention to something external or exterior to oneself. **Idou** is used by the Biblical writers to (1) prompt or arouse the reader's attention (introducing something new or unusual), (2) to mark a strong emphasis ("Indeed!" Lk 13:16) and (3) to call the reader to pay close attention (very similar to #1) so that one will listen, remember or consider.

**Spurgeon** adds that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Gentle** (4239) **praus** - some sources state it originates from **paos** = easy, mild or soft) (**Click** for in depth study of the related noun "gentleness" = **prautes** which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit - Gal 5:23<sup>note</sup>) describes those who are of a quiet, gentle spirit, in opposition to the proud and supercilious Scribes and Pharisees and their disciples. We have a compound word **gentleman**, which once fully expressed the meaning of the word meek, but in our modern society has almost wholly lost its original meaning. **Paus** describes a person who is not overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, but instead one who is gentle, humble, lowly, defers, and is considerate or mild. Ultimately person who manifests **praus** is the one who imitates Jesus (cf His gentleness in Mt 11:29<sup>note</sup>) enabled of course by the power of His indwelling Spirit.

**Praus** - 4v - Matt. 5:5; Matt. 11:29; Matt. 21:5; 1 Pet. 3:4

**Donkey** (3688) **onos** - donkey (male or female), domesticated animal for burden-bearing or riding

(**Complete Biblical Library**) **Classical Greek** **Onos**, the common noun for "donkey" occurs frequently in Greek literature as early as the Eighth Century B.C. It is also used for other animals in classical Greek, such as a "hake" (fish) and a wingless locust (cf. Liddell-Scott). Figuratively, it can be found in classical Greek to describe "one who can make nothing of music," "one who gets into a scrape by his own clumsiness," and of "one who gets what he wants" (through stubbornness) (ibid.).

**Septuagint Usage** **Onos** occurs frequently in the Septuagint, usually translating the Hebrew term **chāmôr**, "donkey." Frequently it is listed with other animals as part of someone's valued possessions (cf. Genesis 12:16; 24:35; Exodus 13:13; Zechariah 14:15). Donkeys were also used for riding (cf. 2 Samuel [LXX 2 Kings] 17:23; 19:26). In addition to carrying men and women, donkeys were also used as general "beasts of burden" (cf. Genesis 22:3,5; Isaiah 32:20) and might even be used to carry a dead body (1 Kings 13:29 [LXX 4 Kings 13:29]). However, donkeys were not normally used by military personnel (cf. Numbers 22:21; 1 Samuel 25:20 [LXX 1 Kings 25:20]). Thus Jesus' use of the donkey is consistent with His first coming as the "Prince of Peace" (cf. Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1-7; John 12:14).

**New Testament Usage** **Onos** occurs only six times in the Greek New Testament, and four of these cases are in connection with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:2,5,7; John 12:15). Both Matthew 21:4,5 and John 12:14,15 record that Jesus' chosen method of entry fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, i.e., that Jerusalem's king would come in a humble manner, riding on a "donkey" (rather than a horse). Matthew specified that two animals were brought to Jesus, an "ass" (**onos**) and a "colt" (**pōlos** [4311]). It is not clear, however, whether Jesus rode on both (alternately?) or whether the older animal was brought along only to calm the younger animal, since it had never been ridden before (see Mark 11:2 and Luke 19:30; see also **onarion** [3541]).

In Luke 13:15 Jesus reminded His critics how they performed necessary work on the Sabbath when they loosed their animals and led them to water. Surely the ox or ass (**onos**) thus cared for was not more valuable than the woman whom Jesus had just healed on the Sabbath! In a similar context, Jesus spoke of setting free "an ass or an ox" which might fall into a pit on the Sabbath (Luke 14:5). Some Greek manuscripts have the word "son" (**huios** [5048]) instead of **onos** in this verse.

**ONOS** - 5V - Matt. 21:2; Matt. 21:5; Matt. 21:7; Lk. 13:15; Jn. 12:15

**ONOS IN SEPTUAGINT** - Gen. 12:16; Gen. 22:3; Gen. 22:5; Gen. 24:35; Gen. 30:43; Gen. 32:5; Gen. 32:15; Gen. 34:28; Gen. 42:26; Gen. 42:27; Gen. 43:18; Gen. 43:24; Gen. 44:3; Gen. 44:13; Gen. 45:23; Gen. 47:17; Gen. 49:11; Exod. 13:13; Exod. 21:33; Exod. 22:4; Lev. 15:9; Num. 22:21; Num. 22:22; Num. 22:23; Num.

22:25; Num. 22:27; Num. 22:28; Num. 22:29; Num. 22:30; Num. 22:32; Num. 22:33; Num. 31:30; Num. 31:34; Num. 31:39; Num. 31:45; Deut. 22:3; Deut. 22:4; Deut. 22:10; Deut. 28:31; Jos. 9:4; Jos. 15:18; Jdg. 5:10; Jdg. 6:4; Jdg. 15:15; Jdg. 15:16; Jdg. 19:3; Jdg. 19:10; Jdg. 19:19; Jdg. 19:21; Jdg. 19:28; 1 Sam. 8:16; 1 Sam. 9:3; 1 Sam. 9:5; 1 Sam. 9:20; 1 Sam. 10:2; 1 Sam. 10:14; 1 Sam. 10:16; 1 Sam. 12:3; 1 Sam. 15:3; 1 Sam. 22:19; 1 Sam. 25:18; 1 Sam. 25:20; 1 Sam. 25:23; 1 Sam. 25:42; 1 Sam. 27:9; 2 Sam. 16:1; 2 Sam. 17:23; 2 Sam. 19:26; 1 Ki. 2:40; 1 Ki. 13:13; 1 Ki. 13:23; 1 Ki. 13:24; 1 Ki. 13:28; 1 Ki. 13:29; 2 Ki. 4:22; 2 Ki. 4:24; 2 Ki. 6:25; 2 Ki. 7:7; 2 Ki. 7:10; 1 Chr. 5:21; 1 Chr. 12:40; 1 Chr. 27:30; Ezr. 2:67; Neh. 7:68; Neh. 13:15; Job 1:3; Job 1:14; Job 6:5; Job 11:12; Job 24:5; Job 39:5; Job 42:12; Prov. 26:3; Isa. 1:3; Isa. 21:7; Isa. 30:6; Isa. 32:14; Isa. 32:20; Jer. 14:6; Jer. 22:19; Jer. 48:6; Ezek. 23:20; Zech. 14:15

**Colt** (4454) **polos** is the young offspring of a horse or donkey. In the NT used of a donkey, foal, colt; joined with ónos, a donkey (Matt. 21:2, 5, 7; John 12:15). All 12 NT uses of polos are in the account of the Triumphal Entry. While the word usually refers to the young of a horse, the Gospel accounts specify that Jesus rode on the foal of a donkey, i.e., on a “young donkey.” This young animal had never been ridden (Mark 11:2; Luke 19:30). It is not surprising that a young donkey should be tethered close to its parent (Matthew 21:2).

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#### QUESTION - [What does the Bible mean when it refers to a “Daughter of Zion”](#)?

**ANSWER-** The “daughter of Zion” is mentioned several times in the Old Testament, usually in prophecy and once in poetry. “**Zion**” meant Jerusalem and, later, Israel as the people of God. “**Daughter of Zion**,” then, does not refer to a specific person. It’s a metaphor for Israel and the loving, caring, patient relationship God has with His chosen people.

As a representation of the people of Israel, the daughter of Zion is described in several different situations:

2 Kings 19:21: A people confident in the deliverance of their God. When Assyria threatened Jerusalem, King Hezekiah went to the Lord. In response, God sent Isaiah to reassure Hezekiah that Jerusalem would not fall to Assyria, and God considered the threatening insult to “the virgin daughter of Zion” as a personal affront to Himself.

Isaiah 1:8: A hut, abandoned after judgment came to an evil family. Here, Isaiah compares the rebellion of Judah to a sick body in a devastated land. The daughter of Zion is left as a lone remnant—a shelter hidden in the vineyard or a hut in a cucumber field that barely escaped destruction.

Jeremiah 4:31: A woman in labor, helpless before attackers. The steadfastness of Hezekiah was rare in Judah—most kings encouraged rebellion against God instead of loyalty to God. Jeremiah warns that if the nation does not turn away from evil, God will punish them severely. And the people will be helpless against it—as helpless as a woman in labor.

Isaiah 62:11: A people awaiting salvation. After the punishment of exile, God promises restoration to Israel. He will rejoice over His chosen people again. And in verse 11, He promises the daughter of Zion, “Lo, your salvation comes; behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.”

Micah 4:13: A bull that threshes his enemies. In verse 10, God warns that the daughter of Zion will suffer as much as a woman in labor. But in verse 13, He promises vengeance. The weak, powerless woman will become a bull with horns of iron and hoofs of bronze that will crush its enemies.

Zechariah 9:9: A land awaiting its king. This prophecy promises Israel’s enemies will be destroyed, but also speaks about a more permanent solution to the problem of sin. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Should in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; he is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Despite the consistent rebellion of the daughter of Zion against her Father, He promises to restore her and present her with a Deliverer-King in the form of Jesus.

**Daughter** implies that God is a loving father. He cherishes and loves His people, even while they reject Him. By using the metaphor “daughter of Zion,” God showed how He felt for the rebellious Israelites: frustrated, angry, but always with an eye to the future when the relationship would be restored, and He could once again return to them and welcome them into His arms (Zechariah 2:10).

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#### Related Resource:

- [What is Zion? What is Mount Zion?](#)
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## [A King on a Donkey](#)

See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey. Matthew 21:5

Today's Scripture & Insight: Matthew 21:1–11

It was Sunday—the day we now call Palm Sunday. Without a doubt, this wasn't Jesus' first visit to Jerusalem. As a devout Jew, He would've gone to the city every year for the three great feasts (Luke 2:41–42; John 2:13; 5:1). In the past three years, Christ had also ministered and taught in Jerusalem. But this Sunday His coming into the city was radically different.

By riding a young donkey into Jerusalem at a time when thousands of worshipers were coming into the city, Jesus was the center of attention (Matthew 21:9–11). Why would He take the place of prominence before thousands of people when for the past three years He'd deliberately kept a low profile? Why would He accept the people's proclamation that He was King just five days before His death?

Matthew says that this took place to fulfill a five-hundred-year-old prophecy (Matthew 21:4–5) that God's chosen king would come into Jerusalem "righteous and victorious, [yet] lowly and riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9; see also Genesis 49:10–11).

This was a truly unusual way for a triumphant king to enter a city. Conquering kings normally rode on mighty stallions. But Jesus didn't come riding a warhorse. This reveals what kind of King Jesus is. He came in meekness and lowliness. Jesus came not for war, but for peace, establishing peace between God and us (Acts 10:36; Colossians 1:20). By: K. T. Sim

What kind of king is Jesus to you today? How can you honor Him as your King?

Jesus, thank You for coming into Jerusalem to reveal Your mighty and humble ways. Fill my heart with Your peace.

Learn more about Jesus' life in the area of Judea with this [online course](#).

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## [The Promise Of A King](#)

Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey. — Matthew 21:5

Today's Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

For all his education, Austrian-born psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud couldn't predict how history was going to unfold. When Communist revolutionaries were laying the foundations of Soviet tyranny on the corpses of their own countrymen, Freud wrote, "At a time when great nations are declaring that they expect to find their salvation solely from a steadfast adherence to Christian piety, the upheaval in Russia . . . seems to promise a better future." How mistaken that godless man was!

Freud's failure to predict the future stands in stark contrast to the hundreds of fulfilled prophecies of the Bible. People may make educated guesses, but only God knows the future.

None of the Bible's prophecies are more wonderful than those about the Messiah. The Old Testament foretold many details of Christ's life and death, such as His virgin birth (Isa. 7:10-14), sacrificial death (Isa. 53), and even His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Zech. 9:9; Mt. 21:5).

How wonderful that the all-knowing God promises that the King who came on a donkey nearly 2,000 years ago will one day return in glory and power (2 Th. 1:7-10). Until then, the same Divine Promise Keeper will care for those who have asked Christ to reign in their hearts. By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God kept His promise of the Savior's birth  
That wondrous night when Jesus came to earth;  
And still today the prophets' message rings:  
He'll come again to reign as King of kings.  
—Hess

Christ's second coming is as certain as His first.

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## [The Lord's Donkey](#)

Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey. — Matthew 21:5

Today's Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11



People often speak of donkeys in belittling terms. You may have heard the expression, “I’m just someone who has to do all the donkey work.” Or “So-and-so is as stubborn as a mule” (a mule is part donkey).

These sayings overlook the contributions of a truly valuable animal. Donkeys have served the human race for thousands of years. They were once prized as symbols of humility, gentleness, and peace.

In Bible days, donkeys that had never been ridden were regarded as especially suitable for religious purposes. So it was most fitting that Jesus sent for a colt to perform the royal task of carrying Him into Jerusalem. How enviable was that donkey’s mission! How like our mission as Jesus’ followers!

A missionary in China calls herself “the Lord’s donkey.” She’s a humble believer, “carrying” her Lord faithfully into town after town and training others to do likewise. The Lord has need of many such “donkeys” in today’s world—humble people who will carry Him into their Jerusalem and make Him known.

The donkey had to be untied before Jesus could use it. We too must be released from worldly attachments if we are to serve Christ. Are we willing to be the Lord’s donkey? By: Joanie Yoder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Teach me to do the humble task  
The very best I can,  
And not to look for greater calls  
Which may oppose Thy plan.  
—Bernheisel

Humble work becomes holy work when it's done for God.

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## DONKEY MENTALITY

Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. —Matthew 21:5

A minister referred to Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem and asked, “What if the donkey on which Jesus was riding had thought all the cheering was for him? What if that small animal had believed that the hosannas and the branches were in his honour?”

The minister then pointed to himself and said, “I’m a donkey. The longer I’m here the more you’ll come to realise that. I am only a Christ bearer and not the object of praise.”

In recording Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, Matthew referred to the prophecy of Zechariah: “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey’” (Matt. 21:5; see Zech. 9:9).

On Palm Sunday the donkey was merely the bearer of Christ, bringing the Son of God into the city where He would give His life for the sins of the world.

If we could develop a healthy ‘donkey mentality’, what an asset that would be as we travel the road of life. Instead of wondering what people think of us, our concern would be, “Can they see Christ Jesus, the King?” Rather than seeking credit for service rendered, we would be content to lift up the Lord. David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

A CHRISTIAN’S LIFE IS A WINDOW THROUGH WHICH OTHERS CAN SEE JESUS.

**Matthew 21:6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them,**

- **and did:** Ge 6:22 12:4 Ex 39:43 40:16 1Sa 15:11 Joh 15:14

## **DISCIPLES' OBEY WITHOUT HESITATION**

**The disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **went and did just as Jesus had instructed** ([suntasso](#) - directed, commanded) **them** - No delay. No debate. Unquestioning obedience marks the disciples at this point in spite of no explanation or clarification. The disciples followed instructions without questioning or hesitation even though it might have seemed unusual (taking someone else’s donkey!), they trusted Jesus’ word. Their obedience helped fulfill Old Testament prophecy, showing that God’s plan was unfolding just as

promised. Their obedience is an example of faith in motion — not just hearing, but doing (James 1:22).

**THOUGHT** - Like the disciples, we might be called to follow Jesus even when it doesn't fully make sense to us. Have you ever considered that your simple acts of obedience can have eternal significance, even helping to fulfill God's larger purposes? As Paul wrote "now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1Co 13:12+) And as you may have heard someone say obedience often precedes understanding. God may only give us the next step and not the full picture and yet faith acts on His Word. While it may sound somewhat silly, let me ask you are there "donkeys" in your life you need to go and untie, tasks that seem small to you but are significant in God's eyes? Lord, by Your Spirit and Word enable us to trust You even when we don't fully understand and give us the faith to obey quickly and the courage to believe that our small steps are part of fulfilling Your greater plan. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**Spurgeon** applies their obedience to their Lord - This should be an accurate description of the conduct of all Christians: The disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them. They did not question or criticize their King's commands; they obeyed them, which was much better. What a church should we see on earth if this were universally true! They carried out their King's bidding in every detail. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Instructed** (4929) *suntasso* from [sun/syn](#) = together + [tasso](#) - draw up in order, arrange means literally to arrange or place in order together; hence order, command, instruct

[Complete Biblical Library](#) *Suntassō* is a compound of the preposition *sun* (4713), "with, together," and the verb *tassō* (4872), "to place in order, to arrange, to fix." It is best translated "to appoint" or "to direct." Matthew is the only New Testament author who used this verb. In Matthew 26:19 the disciples did as they were "directed" by Jesus in regard to preparation for the Passover. *Suntassō* appears again in Matthew 27:10 in a quote from Jeremiah 32:6-9. The Old Testament passage says that Jeremiah bought a potter's field as "directed" by the Lord. It was a foreshadowing of the actions of the chief priests with Judas' money. (Some manuscripts have *suntassō* in Matthew 21:6 also.)

**SUNTASSO - 3V - directed(2), instructed(1)** Matt. 21:6; Matt. 26:19; Matt. 27:10

**SUNTASSO IN THE SEPTUAGINT** - Gen. 18:19; Gen. 26:11; Exod. 1:17; Exod. 1:22; Exod. 5:6; Exod. 6:13; Exod. 9:12; Exod. 12:35; Exod. 16:16; Exod. 16:24; Exod. 16:32; Exod. 16:34; Exod. 19:7; Exod. 27:20; Exod. 31:6; Exod. 31:13; Exod. 34:4; Exod. 35:4; Exod. 35:10; Exod. 35:29; Exod. 36:1; Exod. 36:5; Exod. 36:8; Exod. 38:21; Exod. 38:22; Exod. 39:5; Exod. 39:7; Exod. 39:21; Exod. 39:26; Exod. 39:29; Exod. 39:31; Exod. 39:32; Exod. 39:42; Exod. 39:43; Exod. 40:19; Exod. 40:21; Exod. 40:23; Exod. 40:25; Exod. 40:27; Exod. 40:30; Lev. 8:4; Lev. 8:9; Lev. 8:13; Lev. 8:17; Lev. 8:31; Lev. 8:36; Lev. 9:21; Lev. 10:15; Lev. 10:18; Lev. 13:54; Lev. 16:34; Lev. 24:23; Num. 1:19; Num. 2:34; Num. 3:16; Num. 3:51; Num. 4:49; Num. 8:3; Num. 8:22; Num. 9:5; Num. 15:23; Num. 15:36; Num. 17:11; Num. 19:2; Num. 20:9; Num. 20:27; Num. 26:4; Num. 27:11; Num. 27:23; Num. 30:1; Num. 31:21; Num. 31:31; Num. 31:41; Num. 31:47; Num. 34:13; Num. 35:2; Num. 36:2; Num. 36:6; Num. 36:10; Deut. 4:23; Deut. 5:15; Jos. 4:3; Jos. 4:8; Jos. 8:27; Jos. 8:29; Jos. 9:24; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:15; Jos. 24:30; Job 25:5; Job 37:6; Job 37:12; Job 38:12; Job 42:9; Prov. 30:8; Isa. 10:6; Isa. 13:3; Isa. 27:4; Isa. 37:26; Jer. 26:2; Jer. 26:8; Jer. 27:4; Jer. 29:23; Jer. 32:13; Jer. 32:35; Jer. 34:22; Jer. 37:21; Dan. 11:23

**Matthew 21:7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats.**

- **brought:** Mk 11:4-8 Lu 19:32-35
- **laid their coats on them:** 2Ki 9:13

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:4-8+ They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they \*untied ([historical present tense](#)) it. 5 Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 **They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission.** 7 They \*brought ([historical present tense](#)) the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it. 8 And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields.

Luke 19:32-35+ So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. 33 As they were

untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 They said, "The Lord has need of it." 35 They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it.

2 Kings 9:13 Then they hurried and each man took his garment and placed it under him on the bare steps, and blew the trumpet, saying, "Jehu is king!"

## THE DISCIPLES' FAITH IN ACTION

**and brought the donkey ([onos](#)) and the colt ([polos](#)), and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats** -Only Matthew gives this detail that it was the **colt** and his mother. Christ's ability to ride an unbroken colt through wildly cheering and demonstrating crowds is yet another evidence of His deity and His total mastery over all creation. We all know how wildly an unbroken colt will react to being saddled! Not this one! It instantly owned Jesus as its Lord.

As an aside be careful what sources you read as "Numerous scholars (**ED**: I PUT "SCHOLARS" IN QUOTES!) have suggested that the present account (TRIUMPHAL ENTRY) is an early Christian myth created and read back into the life of Jesus on the basis of the church's reading of Zech. 9:9 (Bultmann 1968: 261–62; Dibelius 1934: 121–22). " (Robert Stein - see [Mark Baker Exegetical Commentary- Page 33](#))

**NET NOTE** - Grk "garments"; but this refers in context to their outer cloaks. The action is like 2 Kgs 9:13.

**Brian Bell** adds "The disciples are instructed to bring both of them, perhaps so the mom could settle the youngster down. These animals were quite expensive, and we see in Lk 19:33 ('owners') that there were at least two owners who had gone in together to buy these donkeys. In our culture today, it would be like someone coming up to a bright red convertible Porsche, opening the door, starting the car and driving away. When the owner comes running outside you would just say, "The Lord needs it." When the disciples were sent to get a colt, Jesus was putting into place yet one more very specific prophecy about who He was. In Zechariah 9:9, which was written some five hundred years earlier.

**What the Bible Teaches** - The triumphal entry into Jerusalem is not only the culmination of the journey that began at Luke 9:51+, and the fulfillment of the prophecy by Zechariah 9:9, it is one of the most important events in the life and ministry of the Lord. **It is recorded in all four Gospels which is not true of His birth, temptation, transfiguration nor the Gethsemane experience.** If He had not ridden on the colt in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, they the nation would have had some excuse for not knowing Him. At the time of this entry He proclaimed His kingship publicly and officially ([What the Bible Teaches – Luke](#))

**Spurgeon** - The disciples also brought the ass and the colt; in no way deviating from the orders which they had received. They added actions which naturally grew out of their King's orders. There must be fit caparison for the steeds which are to be employed for such a royal procession, so they put on them their clothes. This was done of their own accord. Many are ready to fetch other men's asses, but slow to lend their own clothes; these disciples were willing and eager to bear their share in the triumphal procession of the Lord Jesus. From first to last there was no forced contribution or mercenary service; all was most voluntary: the ass and foal were cheerfully lent, and the garments were spontaneously placed thereon. All was simple and natural, full of truth and heartiness. How different from the artificial ceremonials of ordinary monarchs! They set him thereon. When men previously had tried to take Jesus by force, to make him a king in earthly fashion, he withdrew himself from them; but the hour for his public entry into Jerusalem had arrived, and he therefore allowed his disciples to set him upon the lowly beast that was to carry him into the city. Gladly they put the Lord in the place of honor, and joyfully they walked at his side. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:8 Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road.**

- **others**: Lev 23:40 Joh 12:13

### Related Passages:

John 12:12-13+ On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 **took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him**, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel."

[Chronological Bible](#) - Mt 21:8 with Lk 19:36; Jn 12:13; Mk 11:8 - {36 As he went along, LK} 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut {palm JN} branches from the trees {in the fields MK}

and spread them on the road.

## JESUS ENTERS THE HOLY CITY

**Most of the crowd-** But not all!

**Mark Moore** - It was no accident this crowd is assembled. The Passover pilgrims poured into Jerusalem over this very hill. They had come filled with political and religious fervor. Earlier Passovers precipitated a revolt against Archelaus ([see note](#)) (4 B.C., cf. J.Wars of the Jews 2.8–13 / Antiquities 17.206–218) and the desecration of the Temple by the Samaritans (c. A.D. 6–9; Ant. 18.29–30). This festival usually brought the Roman forces with it (J.W. 2.224-[note](#), Ant. 20.106–107-[note](#))....Some in the crowd laid their garments on the ground (2 Kgs 9:13; cf. Str. B. 1:844). Others cut palm branches (cf. Rev. 7:9; 1 Macc 13:51; 2 Macc 10:6–7; m. Suk. 3–4) from the trees in the adjacent fields and laid them down for the colt to walk on. (Palm branches took on political significance during the Maccabean revolt (c. 166 B.C.). Since more than half of Jesus' disciples share names with Maccabean heroes, it is not too surprising that John observes this regal gesture of waving palms; cf. W. Farmer, "The Palm Branches in John 12, 13," JTS 3 1952: 62–66.) Both of these are political and regal gestures. In other words, the crowds welcome Jesus as King in the Holy City. As Jesus crests the Mt. of Olives, this huge multitude breaks into jubilant shouts which echo across the city. Its sheer volume has attracted everyone's attention, and its Messianic implications have generated excitement. From Psalm 118:25–26, viewed by the Rabbis as Messianic (cf. Tg. Ps. 118:22), they borrow such phrases as "Hosannah" and "blessed is he who comes."<sup>13</sup> And they add to these such Messianic words as "David," "Kingdom," "Peace," "Glory in the highest." Their message rings out loud and clear. Predictably the Sanhedrin is fit to be tied. Jesus will deal with them shortly. (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos](#) or [book format](#))

**Spread ([stronnuo](#)) their coats ([himation](#) - cloaks, robes, garments) in the road,** This was an honor bestowed on a king and expressed their submission to Jesus as their King. The idea is that they were "in effect" placing themselves under His feet. So instead of doing it physically people would throw their coats beneath His path.

**Brian Bill** asks "Can you imagine what all this commotion would have done to the colt? Remember, it had never been ridden before and now Jesus was on its back, the crowd was shouting, and cloaks and branches were being laid in front of it as it walked down the hill toward Jerusalem. The laying of cloaks on the road would be like rolling out the red carpet for someone today. In 2 Kings 9:13, people spread cloaks under King [Jehu](#) as he walked on the bare stairs. The people recognized Jesus as royalty and gave Him the honor afforded a King." ([A Big Crowd Meets a King](#))

In 2 Kings 9:13 we see casting cloaks in the path of one acclaimed as king -- "Then they hurried and each man took his garment and placed it under him on the bare steps, and blew the trumpet, saying, "[Jehu](#) is king!" Then they hurried and each man took his garment and placed it under him on the bare steps, and blew the trumpet, saying, "[Jehu](#) is king!"

**Wuest** - Matthew and Luke say that they spread the garments in the road, Mark, into the road. They threw them into the road and spread them there. Matthew, Mark, and John each use a different word for "branches." **Matthew** speaks of a young slip or shoot, a twig; **Mark**, of a mass of straw, rushes, or leaves beaten together or strewed loose, so as to form a bed or carpeted way; and **John**, of palm-branches, the feathery fronds forming the tufted crown of the tree. Each group contributed its own road-decorations. Robertson says that the deliberate conduct of Jesus here could have but one meaning, namely, that this was His formal presentation of Himself as the Messiah. The crowds realized this and entered into the spirit of the occasion. The people, however, expected the Lord to set up His rule in opposition to that of Rome, and deliver the Jews from the yoke of their oppressors.



**And others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading ([stronnuo](#) - imperfect tense - again and again) them in the road ([hodos](#))** - John 12:13+ tells us they were PALM TREES, which had nationalistic implications for they were connected to prominent Jewish victories in the past (cf 1Macc 13:51). And so the crowd is throwing the palm branches on Jesus' path. John seems to suggest that the crowd was also waving the palm branches (although waving is not definitely stated) as they were shouting "[Hosanna](#)!" (which means "Save Now" or "Save, we pray.") Take a moment of respite to play and worship the coming King as you

sing [Hosanna](#).

**John MacArthur** adds this comment on the **BRANCHES** - From John 12:13 we learn that the branches were from palm trees, symbolic of salvation and joy and picturing the magnificent tribute that the "great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues" one day will present "before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches ... in their hands" (Rev. 7:9). (See [The MacArthur Commentary](#))

**Paul Apple** - **The Triumphal Entry** – (maybe the Triumphal Procession would be better) - **Palm Sunday** – occurred on the first day of Passion week – either **Sunday or Monday** ([MacArthur favors Monday and calls it "Palm Monday"](#)) (The palms were) Not some symbol of peace and pleasantness as in our Sunday School classes with young children but symbol of Maccabean revolt by political revolutionaries -- The Palm branches signify the expectation of a military victory of their king over the occupying Romans. Look at [Rev. 7:9+](#) the martyrs coming out of the Great Tribulation ("palm branches were in their hands;"). - What should we call it? **The Reception That Wasn't** ([John MacArthur calls it "The False Coronation of the True King"](#)) – looking not so much at the procession but what took place upon His arrival. **Where does all this excitement and anticipation lead?** Excitement Over Jesus That Stops Short Of Worshiping Him As King Over All Quickly Fades Away.

**Hendriksen** - At this point it is important to take note of the fact that the crowd that accompanied Jesus as he started out from Bethany does not remain the only one that participates in the activities pertaining to the triumphal entry. A caravan of pilgrims had arrived at Jerusalem previously. Having heard that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead and was now on his way toward the city, these people came pouring out of the eastern gate to meet him. With fronds cut from palm trees they go forth to welcome Jesus (John 12:1, 12, 13a, 18). Having done so they turn around and, as it were, lead Jesus down the western slope of the mount of Olives and so into the city. The crowd from Bethany continues to follow. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

**Brian Bill** on **branches** (which John 12:13+ calls "palm branches") - This was a common way to welcome a victorious King when he would return from battle. These palm branches were also a symbol of joy and victory and were placed on graves as a sign of eternal life. Since they often grew out in the desert near water, palm trees were a sign that life-giving activity was near. By laying palm branches on the road, the people were signifying that Jesus was the victorious King who gives eternal life to those out wandering in the desert of life. The gifts of the colt, the cloaks, and the branches all point to who Jesus is. What started out as a Jewish feast is now turning into a Messiah celebration. The colt was expensive, the cloaks were essential, and the branches were an expression of joy. Here's the principle: The Lord has the right to make use of anything I own. Is He asking you to give something that is expensive? Is He longing for you to give something that you consider essential? Or, have you been holding out on an expression of joy?

**F F Bruce** - From the time of the Maccabees palms or palm-branches had been used as a national symbol. Palm-branches figured in the procession which celebrated the rededication of the temple in 164 bc (2 Maccabees 10:7) and again when the winning of full political independence was celebrated under Simon in 141 bc (1 Maccabees 13:51). Later, palms appeared as national symbols on the coins struck by the Judean insurgents during the first and second revolts against Rome (ad 66-70 and 132-135)." (Borrow [Gospel of John](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - The people were so numerous that they are described as a very great multitude. Unusual unanimity prevailed amongst the populace: they all gathered to Jesus. The patriarch Jacob had foretold, concerning the Shiloh, "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49:10) This was fulfilled many times during the Savior's earthly ministry; and it is still continually being fulfilled. The crowd was in a state of great excitement, and came marching along with Jesus in high enthusiasm. Carpeting the road, they spread, their garments in the way; and as if this were not enough, others cut down branches from the trees, and, strawed them in the way. Our first parents, in their shame, made clothes of the leaves of trees (Genesis 3:7+); but now both clothes and leaves are at the feet of man's Redeemer. John says that the people "took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him." (John 12:13+) The long feathery fronds of the palms would be suitable either for waving in the air, or casting upon the ground before the King. The common people, in the simplest but most effective manner, prepared a royal welcome for the [Son of David](#). What an unusual sight! They were on the tiptoe of expectation, looking for a kingly Deliverer, and they vaguely hoped that "Jesus the prophet of Nazareth" might prove to be the Promised One. He had excited their wonder, raised their hopes, and earned their reverence. For the time they held Him in high honor. Do we wonder at it when we think how He had healed their sick, and had fed them by thousands when they fainted? (Matthew 21 Commentary)

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**QUESTION** - [What is the significance of the triumphal entry?](#) [WATCH VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - The triumphal entry is that of Jesus coming into Jerusalem on what we know as [Palm Sunday](#), the Sunday before the crucifixion (John 12:1, 12). The story of the triumphal entry is one of the few incidents in the life of Jesus which appears in all four Gospel accounts (Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19). Putting the four accounts together, it becomes clear that the triumphal entry was a significant event, not only to the people of Jesus' day, but to Christians throughout history. We celebrate Palm Sunday to remember that momentous occasion.



On that day, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a borrowed donkey's colt, one that had never been ridden before. The disciples spread their cloaks on the donkey for Jesus to sit on, and the multitudes came out to welcome Him, laying before Him their cloaks and the branches of palm trees. The people hailed and praised Him as the "King who comes in the name of the Lord" as He rode to the temple, where He taught the people, healed them, and drove out the money-changers and merchants who had made His Father's house a "den of robbers" (Mark 11:17).

Jesus' purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public His claim to be their Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Matthew says that the King coming on the foal of a donkey was an exact fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Jesus rides into His capital city as a conquering King and is hailed by the people as such, in the manner of the day. The streets of Jerusalem, the royal city, are open to Him, and like a king He ascends to His palace, not a temporal palace but the spiritual palace that is the temple, because His is a spiritual kingdom. He receives the worship and praise of the people because only He deserves it. No longer does He tell His disciples to be quiet about Him (Matthew 12:16, 16:20) but to shout His praises and worship Him openly. The spreading of cloaks was an act of homage for royalty (see 2 Kings 9:13). Jesus was openly declaring to the people that He was their King and the Messiah they had been waiting for.

Unfortunately, the praise the people lavished on Jesus was not because they recognized Him as their Savior from sin. They welcomed Him out of their desire for a messianic deliverer, someone who would lead them in a revolt against Rome. There were many who, though they did not believe in Christ as Savior, nevertheless hoped that perhaps He would be to them a great temporal deliverer. These are the ones who hailed Him as King with their many hosannas, recognizing Him as the Son of David who came in the name of the Lord. But when He failed in their expectations, when He refused to lead them in a massive revolt against the Roman occupiers, the crowds quickly turned on Him. Within just a few days, their hosannas would change to cries of "Crucify Him!" (Luke 23:20-21). Those who hailed Him as a hero would soon reject and abandon Him.

The story of the triumphal entry is one of contrasts, and those contrasts contain applications to believers. It is the story of the King who came as a lowly servant on a donkey, not a prancing steed, not in royal robes, but on the clothes of the poor and humble. Jesus Christ comes not to conquer by force as earthly kings but by love, grace, mercy, and His own sacrifice for His people. His is not a kingdom of armies and splendor but of lowliness and servanthood. He conquers not nations but hearts and minds. His message is one of peace with God, not of temporal peace. If Jesus has made a triumphal entry into our hearts, He reigns there in peace and love. As His followers, we exhibit those same qualities, and the world sees the true King living and reigning in triumph in us.

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### **The First Palm Sunday - Henry Morris**

"And [Jesus] saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him" (Mark 11:2).

On that first Palm Sunday, over 1,960 years ago, the Lord Jesus fulfilled the ancient prophecy of Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Always before, so far as all records indicate, Jesus walked wherever He went.

Now He must ride! So He borrowed, from some unknown friend in the village, an ass's colt, upon which He could enter the city of the great King.

Although Jesus' circumstances seemed far too lowly for Him to claim a throne, He did indeed come, having salvation for the few who would receive Him. Most of the people, of course, and almost all their leaders, crowned Him only with thorns, and then made a cross His throne.

There was one who recognized Him, however. The colt He requested was a colt "whereon never man sat," and one can be sure that such a colt could not be ridden by any ordinary man without vehement protest and rejection.

Once long ago, the Lord had opened the mouth of an ass and "the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet" (2 Pet. 2:16). The animals were originally created to be under man's dominion (Gen. 1:26-28), and it was only the entrance of sin into the world that caused the dread of man to come on them (Gen. 9:2). When the true Son of Man and true King of creation calls, then the creatures of the animal kingdom respond, even though His human creatures, whom He loves most of all, still refuse to submit to His rule.

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### **QUESTION - [Why would a king ride a donkey instead of a warhorse \(Zechariah 9:9-10\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Many have wondered why the king mentioned in Zechariah 9:9-10 would ride a donkey into Jerusalem rather than a warhorse. It seems an odd choice for royalty. Kings ride chargers, don't they?

In the ancient Middle Eastern world, leaders rode horses if they rode to war, but donkeys if they came in peace. 1 Kings 1:33 mentions Solomon riding a donkey on the day he was recognized as the new king of Israel. Other instances of leaders riding donkeys are Judges 5:10; 10:4; 12:14; and 2 Samuel 16:2.

The mention of a donkey in Zechariah 9:9-10 fits the description of a king who would be "righteous and having salvation, gentle." Rather than riding to conquer, this king would enter in peace.

Zechariah 9:10 highlights this peace:

"I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."

Note the many details symbolic of peace:

- "Take away the chariots": an end to the main vehicle of war.
- "Take away . . . the war-horses": no need for horses used in war.
- "The battle bow will be broken": no need for bows or arrows for fighting.
- "He will proclaim peace to the nations": His message will be one of reconciliation.
- "His rule shall be from sea to sea": the King will control extended territory with no enemies of concern.

Jesus fulfills this prophecy of Zechariah. The worldwide peace proclaimed by this humble King will be a fulfillment of the angels' song in Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (NKJV). Significantly, Jacob's blessing on his son Judah includes a reference to a donkey and a donkey's foal (Genesis 49:11). Jesus is from the [tribe of Judah](#).

Zechariah 9:9 was fulfilled by the [triumphal entry](#) as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19). Verses 10 and following refer to a future time when the Messiah will reign after defeating His enemies at the [second coming](#).

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**Josephus' Wars of the Jews 2.8-13 - REVOLT AGAINST ARCHELAUS** - (8) At these clamors Archelaus was provoked, but restrained himself from taking vengeance on the authors, on account of the haste he was in of going to Rome, as fearing lest, upon his making war on the multitude, such an action might detain him at home. Accordingly he made trial to quiet the innovators by persuasion rather than by force, and sent his general in a private way to them, and by him exhorted them to be quiet. (9) But the seditious threw stones at him, and drove him away, as he came into the temple, and before he could say anything to them. The like treatment they showed to others, who came to them after him, many of whom were sent by Archelaus, in order to reduce them to sobriety, and these answered still on all occasions after a passionate manner, and it openly appeared that they would not be quiet, if their numbers were but considerable. (10) And, indeed, at the feast of unleavened bread, which was now at hand, and is by the Jews called the passover, and used to be celebrated with a great number of sacrifices, an innumerable multitude of the people came out of the country to worship; some of these stood in the temple bewailing the rabbis [that had been put to death], and procured their sustenance by begging, in order to support their sedition. (11) At this Archelaus was affrighted, and privately sent a tribune, with his cohort of soldiers, upon them, before the disease should spread over the whole multitude, and gave orders that they should constrain those that began the tumult, by force, to be quiet. At these the whole multitude were irritated, and threw stones at many of the soldiers, and killed them; but the tribune fled away wounded, and had much ado to escape so. (12) After which they betook themselves to their sacrifices, as if they had done no mischief; nor did it appear to Archelaus that the multitude could be restrained without bloodshed; so he sent his whole army upon them, the footmen in great multitudes, by the way of the city, and the horsemen by the way of the plain, (13) who, falling upon them on the sudden, as they were offering their sacrifices, destroyed about three thousand of them; but the rest of the multitude were dispersed upon the adjoining mountains; these were followed by Archelaus's heralds, who commanded every one to retire to their own homes; whither they all went, and left the festival.

**Roman Soldiers at the Passover Feast** - (Jewish Wars 2.224) for when the multitude were come together to Jerusalem, to the feast of unleavened bread, and a Roman cohort stood over the cloisters of the temple (for they always were armed and kept guard at the festivals, to prevent any innovation which the multitude thus gathered together might take), one of the soldiers pulled back his garment, and cowering down after an indecent manner, turned his breech to the Jews, and spoke such words as you might expect upon such a posture.

**Ant. 20.106–109-** (106) When that feast which is called the Passover was at hand, at which time our custom is to use unleavened bread, and a great multitude was gathered together from all parts to that feast, Cumanus was afraid lest some attempt of innovation should then be made by them; so he ordered that one regiment of the army should take their arms, and stand in the temple cloisters,

to repress any attempts of innovation, if perchance any such should begin; (107) and this was no more than what the former procurators of Judea did at such festivals; (108) but on the fourth day of the feast, a certain soldier let down his breeches, and exposed his privy members to the multitude, which put those that saw him into a furious rage, and made them cry out that this impious action was not done to reproach them, but God himself; nay, some of them reproached Cumanus, and pretended that the soldier was set on by him; (109) which when Cumanus heard, he was also himself not a little provoked at such reproaches laid upon him; yet did he exhort them to leave off such seditious attempts, and not to raise a tumult at the festival;

**Matthew 21:9 The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!”**

- **Hosanna:** Mt 21:15 Ps 118:24-26 Mk 11:9,10
- **Blessed:** Mt 23:39 Lu 19:37,38 Joh 12:13-15
- **in the highest:** Lu 2:14

#### Related Passages:

Revelation 22:16+ “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

Psalms 118:25-26+ (KNOWN AS A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE, SOMETIMES CALLED "THE CONQUEROR'S PSALM") O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!  
26 **Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD** We have blessed you from the house of the LORD. (COMMENT - Almost two centuries earlier, the Jews had hailed [Simon Maccabeus](#) with the same psalm after he delivered the Acra from Syrian domination.)

Luke 19:37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen,

[Chronological Bible](#) - Lk 19:37 - 37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.

Mt 21:9 with Lk 19:38; Mk 11:10 - 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna (Save) to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he {the king LK} who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Ps 118:26) {“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” MK} “{Peace in heaven and glory LK} Hosanna (Save) in the highest!”

Painting by James Tissot (1836-1902)

## JESUS' "TRIUMPHAL ENTRY"

Notice "**Triumphal Entry**" is in quotation marks. Why did I do that? On one hand His entry was signal for the temporary triumph of evil (very temporary). And it would not be the triumphal entry the Jews were expecting, for they thought He was coming as the King of Israel to defeat Rome. On the other hand, it did mark the coming of greatest triumph in the history of the world, for His death would signal the death of death, the defeat of Satan and the "defanging" of Sin and provide the way for spiritually dead men to live forever with Him. So it was indeed a Triumphal Entry for any and all who would ever place their faith in Him!

In John 1:29+ John the Baptist saw Jesus walking toward him and proclaimed “Behold, the **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!” ([Take a moment to worship the Lamb and May the Spirit move your deepest being to profoundly praise the Lamb](#)) Then a short while later in John 1:49+ Nathanael made the incredibly insightful declaration to Jesus -- “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.” Now some three years later, it was the time of the Passover Feast in Israel and the time had come for Him to acknowledge before the nation of Israel that Nathanael had been correct in his designation and to fulfill John's prophecy as the Passover Lamb! ([This video and song will break your heart dear follower of Christ](#)) Whereas heretofore, Jesus had stopped any attempts to at a public declaration of His identity as Messiah (Mt 16:20, Jn 6:14-15), but “in the fullness of time,” the time had come to open announce and acknowledge that He was the King of Israel, the promised Messiah. As discussed elsewhere, many if not most of the Jewish crowd were hoping His arrival would bring the defeat of the Romans, but such was not to be the case in His first

## "Triumphal Entry."

**Warren Wiersbe** has an interesting note asking "What did this demonstration mean to the Romans? Nothing is recorded about the Roman viewpoint, but it is certain that they kept a close watch that day. During the annual Passover feast, it was not uncommon for some of the Jewish nationalists to try to arouse the people; and perhaps they thought this parade was that kind of an event. I imagine that some of the Roman soldiers must have smiled at the "Triumphal Entry," because it was nothing like their own "[Roman triumph](#)" celebrations in the city of Rome. Whenever a Roman general was victorious on foreign soil, killing at least 5,000 of the enemy, and gaining new territory, he was given a "[Roman triumph](#)" when he returned to the city. It was the Roman equivalent of the American "[ticker-tape parade](#)," only with much more splendor. The victor would be permitted to display the trophies he had won and the enemy leaders he had captured. The parade ended at the arena where some of the captives entertained the people by fighting wild beasts. Compared to a "[Roman triumph](#)," our Lord's entry into Jerusalem was nothing." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Related Video** - [Four versions on one video depicting His entry on youtube.](#)

**The crowds going ahead of** ([proago](#) - present tense) **Him, and those who followed** ([akolouthéo](#) - present tense), **were shouting, "Hosanna ([Hosanna](#)) to the Son of David** - At this point Jesus is surrounded (**going ahead** and **followed**) by a mass of humanity which may have been several hundred thousand people. **Followed** ([akolouthéo](#)) is the verb that often describes Jesus' disciples (following His teaching, His example; e.g., Mk 1:18+, Mk 2:14+, Mt 9:9+), but in this context simply refers to the crowd literally following Him. **Shouting** ([krazo](#)) in the imperfect tense pictures the crowd over and over loudly shouting, almost screaming (used of demons shrieking - Mk 5:5+).

The shout of "**Hosanna**" is sadly ironic because **Hosanna** means "save now" ("please save"), a plea for deliverance, especially in times of national crisis or during worship, but the Jews were not interested in the kind of salvation Jesus was offering. Jn 12:13+ adds they called Him "the King of Israel" which helps us understand that they in fact did not want **spiritual** salvation but desired **political** salvation from Rome. They thought He was coming to inaugurate His Kingdom on earth.

**John MacArthur** adds that "Now at last, they thought, He will manifest Himself as Conqueror. They were about to celebrate Passover, which commemorated the Lord's miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. What better occasion could there be for the Lord's Anointed, the Messiah, to make the ultimate and final deliverance of His people from tyranny? The people wanted a conquering, reigning Messiah who would come in great military power to throw off the brutal yoke of Rome and establish a kingdom of justice and righteousness where God's chosen people would have special favor. But Jesus did not come to conquer Rome but to conquer sin and death. He did not come to make war with Rome but to make peace with God for men. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 261](#))

**Son of David** was clearly recognized as a title of the Messiah. [Gotquestions](#) says "the title "**Son of David**" is more than a statement of physical genealogy. **It is a Messianic title.** When people referred to Jesus as the [Son of David](#), they meant that He was the long-awaited Deliverer, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies."

**Son of David in the NT** (most in Matthew which is not surprising as Matthew is the most "Jewish" of the 4 Gospels!) - Matt. 1:1; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 12:23; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 22:42; Mk. 10:47; Mk. 10:48; Mk. 12:35; Lk. 3:31; Lk. 18:38; Lk. 18:39

**Whitacre on Hosanna** - The cry of Hosanna! is a Hebrew word (hôsî'ah-na) that had become a greeting or shout of praise but that actually meant "Save!" or "Help!" (an intensive form of imperative). Not surprisingly, forms of this word were used to address the king with a need (cf. 2 Sam 14:4; 2 Kings 6:26). Furthermore, the palm branches the people carry are symbolic of a victorious ruler (cf. 1 Macc 13:51; 2 Macc 10:7; 14:4). Indeed, in an apocalyptic text from the Maccabean era, palms are mentioned in association with the coming of the messianic salvation on the Mount of Olives (Testament of Naphtali 5). The cry of Hosanna! and the palm branches are in themselves somewhat ambiguous, but their import is made clear as the crowd adds a further line, Blessed is the King of Israel! (v. John 12:13). Clearly they see in Jesus the answer to their nationalistic, messianic hopes. ([Jesus Enters Jerusalem as King of Israel](#))

**BLESSED** ([eulogéo](#) - perfect tense) **IS HE WHO COMES** ([erchomai](#) - present tense) **IN THE NAME** ([onoma](#)) **OF THE LORD** ([kurios](#)); **Hosanna ([Hosanna](#)) in the highest** (see [note](#)) - In Luke 19:38+ the crowd was shouting "**BLESSED IS THE KING**". The crowd slightly altered the Ps 118:26 which reads "Blessed is the **ONE** who comes in the name of the LORD," and substituted "King." Passover celebrated the Hebrew people's liberation and deliverance out of Egypt and Psalm 118 was one of the Egyptian Hallel's (Ps 113-119). And so the nation of Israel mistakenly anticipates another deliverance like God had brought about from Egypt. They saw Jesus as the Messianic Liberator Who would deliver them from Roman oppression, but they misinterpreted Psalm 118 because they had missed the crucial context that the Messiah would be a Suffering Servant before He would be a conquering King. Note also that this blessing was voiced by the people when Christ entered Jerusalem (Mt 21:9). And when the leaders rebuked the people's praises (Lu 19:37-39+), Jesus then said to the Jews as a nation .

**"Behold (idou), your house is being left to you desolate! "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until (CRITICAL TIME PHRASE = IT WILL COME TO PASS BUT NOT "UNTIL"!)** you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (Mt 23:38-39+)

**A T Robertson** on **"BLESSED..."** - Quotation from Psalm 118:25-26, written, some think, for the dedication of the second temple, or, as others think, for the feast of tabernacles after the return (Ezra 3:1-2). It was sung in the processional recitation then as a welcome to the worshippers. Here the words are addressed to the Messiah as is made plain by the addition of the words, **"even the king of Israel"** as Nathanael called him (John 1:49+). Jesus is here hailed by the multitudes as the long-looked for Messiah of Jewish hope and He allows them so to greet Him (Luke 19:38-40+), a thing that He prevented a year before in Galilee (John 6:14-15). It is probable that "in the name of the Lord" should be taken with "blessed" as in Deut. 21:5; 2 Samuel 6:18; 1 Kings 22:16; 2 Kings 2:24. The Messiah was recognized by Martha as the Coming One (John 11:27) and is so described by the Baptist (Matthew 11:3). Mark (Mark 11:10) adds "the coming kingdom" while Luke (Luke 19:38+) has "the king Who comes." "It was this public acclamation of Jesus as King of Israel or King of the Jews which was the foundation of the charge made against him before Pilate (John 18:33)" (Bernard).

**Henry Morris** - These multitudes were unwittingly fulfilling Psalm 118:25,26 ("Hosanna" means "save now"). However, they only perceived Jesus as "the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matthew 21:11) and were evidently expecting Him somehow to defeat the Romans and restore the kingdom to Israel. People had frequently called Him "son of David," evidently knowing about the genealogy of His (foster) father, and realizing He was the legal heir to David's throne (see note on Matthew 1:16). However, just five days later, these same multitudes--apparently disappointed by His meek submission to arrest and torture by the Jewish and Roman rulers--were calling for His crucifixion, preferring to release Barabbas who had led a rebellion against the Romans (Matthew 27:21,22). ([Defender's Study Bible Note - Matthew 21](#))

*Many people today are open to a Jesus who they think will give them wealth, health, success, happiness, and the other worldly things they want.*

**MacArthur** - They (THE JEWISH CROWD) were right in their belief that He was the Messiah, **the Son of David**, and that He had come **in the name of the Lord**. But they were wrong in their belief about the sort of Deliverer He was. They knew He was a king, but they did not understand the nature of His kingship or His kingdom. They did not realize any more than Pilate that the kingdom He came then to bring was not of this world (John 18:36+). That is why, when it dawned on them a few days later that Jesus had not come to deliver them from the Romans, they turned against Him. When they clamored before Pilate for the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus (John 18:40+), they shouted, in effect, the words Jesus had predicted in the parable of the nobleman: "We do not want this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14+). The people wanted Jesus on their own terms, and they would not bow to a King who was not of their liking, even though He were the Son of God. They wanted Jesus to destroy Rome but not their cherished sins or their hypocritical, superficial religion. But He would not deliver them on their terms, and they would not be delivered on His. He was not a Messiah who came to offer a panacea of external peace in the world but to offer the infinitely greater blessing of internal peace with God. Many people today are open to a Jesus who they think will give them wealth, health, success, happiness, and the other worldly things they want. **Like the multitude at the triumphal entry, they will loudly acclaim Jesus as long as they believe He will satisfy their selfish desires. But like the same multitude a few days later, they will reject and denounce Him when He does not deliver as expected. When His Word confronts them with their sin and their need of a Savior, they curse Him and turn away.** (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** makes the important observation that " This is the only time that Jesus permitted a public demonstration on His behalf, and He did so for at least two reasons. **First, He was fulfilling prophecy and presenting Himself as Israel's king** (Zech. 9:9). How much of this the crowd really understood we cannot tell, even though they responded by quoting from a messianic psalm (Ps. 118:25–26). No doubt many of the Passover pilgrims thought that Jesus would now get rid of the Roman invaders and establish the glorious kingdom. **The second reason for this demonstration was to force the Jewish religious leaders to act.** They had hoped to arrest Him after the Passover (Matt. 26:3–5), but God had ordained that His Son be slain on Passover as the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29; and see 1 Cor. 5:7). Every previous attempt to arrest Jesus had failed because "His hour had not yet come" (John 7:30; 8:20; also see John 13:1; 17:1). When they saw this great public celebration, the leaders knew that they had to act, and the willing cooperation of Judas solved their problem for them (Matt. 26:14–16)." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**NET NOTE** - The expression *ἡσάννα* (**hōsanna**, literally in Hebrew, "O Lord, save") in the quotation from Ps 118:25–26 was probably by this time a familiar liturgical expression of praise, on the order of **"Hail to the king,"** although both the underlying Aramaic and Hebrew expressions meant "O Lord, save us." In words familiar to every Jew, the author is indicating that at this point every messianic expectation is now at the point of realization. It is clear from the words of the psalm shouted by the crowd that Jesus is being proclaimed as messianic king. See E. Lohse, TDNT 9:682–84. **Hosanna** is an Aramaic expression that literally means, "help, I



pray," or "save, I pray." By Jesus' time it had become a strictly liturgical formula of praise, however, and was used as an exclamation of praise to God. A quotation from Ps 118:25–26.

**C H Spurgeon** - Numbers still flocked together till there was not only a multitude, but multitudes, some that went before, and others that followed. The crowds preceding and following the Lord were of one mind concerning him, and, indeed, they seemed to have but one voice. Scarcely knowing what they did, probably dreaming of an earthly kingdom, they lifted up one and the same loyal shout of "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." They quoted an ancient Psalms 118:26<sup>+</sup>, and applied it to Jesus; and in every way expressed their delight and expectation. Alas! how soon this gleam of sunlight gave place to black darkness. The day of palms was closely followed by the day of crucifixion. Thus fickle are the sons of men. "Vox populi" is anything but "Vox Dei." ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Hosanna** (5164) [Hosanna](#) is a word that we hear frequently in worship services, for it is found in many great old hymns and modern spiritual songs. Indeed, it is a word we should hear often, singing loud "Hosanna's", even "Hosanna's in the highest" to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and yet do we all understand what we are singing? The word **hosanna** in English is a transliteration (not a translation) of a Hebrew phrase composed of two Hebrew words (**hoshiya** + **na'** - spelling varies depending on resource consulted) used only once in [Ps 118:25](#) [See below](#)>). The meaning of the original Hebrew phrase is something like "Please save!", "Help, I pray," "Save now," or "Save now, I pray!" (the exact wording depends on source consulted). As **John Piper** explains more fully [below](#), in Jesus' day the word **Hosanna** while originally signifying a cry for help, over time was not only a prayer for help (salvation), but also an invocation of blessing, an exclamation of praise, and/or a shout of celebration. As discussed below, in the context of Jesus' "Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem, the shouts of **Hosanna** from the crowd seem to have had all three nuances.>**Hosanna** would have been a term familiar to everyone in Israel which accounts for the crowds shouting "Hosanna" at the time of the Triumphal Entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem.

While the word Hosanna literally means, "Save now" during Jesus' day the word "hosanna" had, for the most part, lost original meaning and was merely an expression of praise, much like our own use of the word "Amen." However, there is something almost prophetic about the crowd's call for "Hosannah" on the first day of the Passover week. (M. Moore)

[What is the meaning of hosanna?](#)

[What is the meaning of hosanna in the highest?](#)

The modern Webster's Dictionary defines **Hosanna** as "a cry of acclamation and adoration." The 1828 Webster's Dictionary adds that **Hosanna** is "an exclamation of praise to God or an invocation of blessings. In the Hebrew ceremonies, it was a prayer rehearsed on the several days of the Feast of Tabernacles, in which this word was often repeated."

**Hosanna** is similar to [Hallelujah](#), [Sabbath](#), [Sabaoth](#), [Amen](#) in that all these words represent transliteration of Hebrew words or phrases. **Hosanna** is composed of two transliterated Hebrew words (a<sup>n</sup>) = **na** - [see below](#) + h[<sup>y</sup>viAh = **yasha** - [see below](#)). **TWOT** adds that "The Greek **hosanna** is a transliteration of the Hebrew phrase "O save us," even including the phonetic doubling of the **n** of the particle **nā** ([below](#))."

**J A Motyer** explains that **hosanna** represents a

transliteration from Aramaic **hōšā' nā'** (Heb., **hoshiya** + **na'**), meaning "O, save". The precise OT equivalent to the NT cultic shout "Hosanna" is to be found in the **hoshiya** + **na'** of Ps. 118:25. Here [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) does not view it as a cultic cry of the "hallelujah" type, and produces the translation *sōson*. There is general agreement that we should find in [Ps. 118](#) a liturgy for the Feast of Tabernacles, but beyond that interpretations vary as to who the "coming one" of v. 26 is. The view that it is the Jerusalem pilgrim who is so "blessed" by the welcoming priests (see, e.g. IDB II, S.V. Hosanna) is singularly unimpressive. The whole movement of the Psalm, and certainly its exalted tone of spiritual elation, is better suited if we imagine the Davidic king, in his role as the → Melchizedek priest, leading his people in procession to Yahweh's house (cf. NBCR). In this context the cry "O, Save" would indicate an imploring cry to Yahweh to bring to reality that which the liturgy has depicted. Judaism later followed out this thought by making the great cry focus on the expectation of the messianic king.

NT By NT times Hosanna had become a full "cultic cry", exactly as is reflected in [Lxx](#) use of → [allelouia](#). The Greek of Mt. 21:9; Mk. 11:9; Jn. 12:13 **transliterates but does not translate**. The sight of Jesus fulfilling the kingly prophecy of Zech. 9:9, coupled with the strewing and waving of branches reminiscent of the ceremonial fronds which had come to characterize the [Feast of Tabernacles](#), prompted the shout appropriate to that occasion and, all unwittingly, they greeted the true → David with the Davidic welcome. All the NT "hosanna" verses above centre their thought on the "**son of David**", the "**kingdom of David**" and the "**King of Israel**".

**Blessed** (perfect tense) (2127)(**eulogeo** from **eu** = good + **lógos** = word) means speak good or well. "Blessing God" extends (shares) ourselves with the Lord, giving our word to be completely His— i.e. conferring ourselves to Him which fulfills the common OT imperative, "Bless the Lord!" Luke 1:64 "And at once (Lk 1:63) his (Zacharias) mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he was speaking, blessing (eulogéō) God."

[The Discovery Bible](#) says "Scripture calls us to *"bless God!"* See: Lk 1:64,68, 2:28; Ro 1:25, 9:5; 2 Cor 1:3, 11:31; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3. The distinction between *"blessing God"* and *"praising God"* is carefully preserved in the original Hebrew/Greek text of Scripture and therefore *both* should be practiced in true worship! *"Praising God"* *acknowledges (exalts)* His work and character. In contrast, *"blessing God"* means *surrendering oneself* to Him. The scriptural imperative to "bless God!" is frequent in the (*Hebrew*) text of the OT. See Ps 103:1,2, 104:1, etc. Unfortunately, it was "eliminated" by the *NIV* (and other translations), rendering it the same as "praise God." God also "gives Himself away" to us as He blesses us. A. W. Tozer, *"God gives....but He doesn't give away!" Reflection: "Blessing God" means giving ourselves away* to Him. It is *so important to bless God* because this impacts Him *forever*. Why? The Lord never becomes more nor less than He has always been, is, or will be (cf. Rev 4:8). Therefore what impacts God *now....does so forever!* Meditate on this in light of Mal 3:6 and Heb 13:8."

In the comparison below note that all four Gospels quote from Psalm 118:26 part of the Hallel sung during the Passover. Luke changes "He" to "King" which would emphasize the royal character of the One coming. Note that "He who comes" is more literally **"the coming One,"** which is a concept that had definite Messianic overtones among the Jews (see Mt. 11:3; Lk 7:19; Jn 3:31; 6:14; 11:27; Heb. 10:37). Hiebert explains that "While not naming the Messiah, the designation gave expression to the ardent yearning among the Jews for the assured coming of the promised one upon whom all their expectations for the future centered. This coming one they now welcomed in the name of the Lord, the name of Jehovah. He came in the authority denoted by that supreme name."

**COMPARISON OF THE ACCLAIM  
OF THE CROWDS  
AT JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**

Matthew 21:9, 15+	Mark 11:9, 10+	Luke 19:38+	John 12:13+
Multitudes (were) going before Him, and those who followed after (Matthew 21:9+)	Those who went before, and those who followed after (Mk 11:9+)		
Hosanna (Mt 21:9, 15+)	Hosanna (Mk 11:9,10+)		Hosanna
Son of David (Mt 21:9,15+)			Branches of the palm trees
Blessed is <b>He</b> Who comes in the Name of the Lord (Mt 21:9+)	Blessed is <b>He</b> Who comes in the Name of the Lord (Mk 11:9+)	Blessed is <b>the King</b> Who comes in the Name of the Lord	Blessed is <b>He</b> Who comes in the Name of the Lord
		the King	the King of Israel
	Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David (Mk 11:9+)		
		Peace in heaven	

Hosanna  
in the highest (Mt 21:9+)

Hosanna  
in the highest (Mk 11:10+)

Glory  
in the highest!

Children were crying out in  
the temple (Mt 21:15+)

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**QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#) [WATCH THE VIDEO](#)**

**ANSWER** - Seventeen verses in the New Testament describe Jesus as the “son of David.” But the question arises, how could Jesus be the son of David if David lived approximately 1,000 years before Jesus? The answer is that Christ (the Messiah) was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:12–16). Jesus is the promised Messiah, which means He had to be of the lineage of David. Matthew 1 gives the genealogical proof that Jesus, in His humanity, was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph, Jesus’ legal father. The genealogy in Luke 3 traces Jesus’ lineage through His mother, Mary. Jesus is a descendant of David by adoption through Joseph and by blood through Mary. “As to his earthly life [Christ Jesus] was a descendant of David” (Romans 1:3).

Primarily, the title “**Son of David**” is more than a statement of physical genealogy. **It is a Messianic title.** When people referred to Jesus as the Son of David, they meant that He was the long-awaited Deliverer, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Jesus was addressed as “Lord, thou son of David” several times by people who, by faith, were seeking mercy or healing. The woman whose daughter was being tormented by a demon (Matthew 15:22) and the two blind men by the wayside (Matthew 20:30) all cried out to the Son of David for help. The titles of honor they gave Him declared their faith in Him. Calling Him “Lord” expressed their sense of His deity, dominion, and power, and calling Him “Son of David,” expressed their faith that He was the Messiah.

The Pharisees understood exactly what the people meant when they called Jesus “Son of David.” But, unlike those who cried out in faith, the Pharisees were so blinded by their own pride that they couldn’t see what the blind beggars could see—that here was the Messiah they had supposedly been waiting for all their lives. They hated Jesus because He wouldn’t give them the honor they thought they deserved, so when they heard the people hailing Jesus as the Savior, they became enraged (Matthew 21:15) and plotted to destroy Him (Luke 19:47).

Jesus further confounded the scribes and Pharisees by asking them to explain the meaning of this very title: how could it be that the Messiah is the son of David when David himself refers to Him as “my Lord” (Mark 12:35–37; cf. Psalm 110:1)? The teachers of the Law couldn’t answer the question. Jesus thereby exposed the Jewish leaders’ ineptitude as teachers and their ignorance of what the Old Testament taught as to the true nature of the Messiah, further alienating them from Him.

Jesus’ point in asking the question of Mark 12:35 was that the Messiah is *more* than the physical son of David. If He is David’s Lord, He must be greater than David. As Jesus says in Revelation 22:16, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David.” That is, He is both the Creator of David and the Descendant of David. Only the Son of God made flesh could say that.

**Related Resources:**

- [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man?](#)

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**QUESTION - [What is the meaning of hosanna in the highest?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)**

**ANSWER** - The phrase *hosanna in the highest* appears only twice in the Bible, once in Matthew and again in Mark, during the [triumphal entry](#) of Jesus into Jerusalem. The people were crowded around the gate watching Jesus enter the city, and they were celebrating and calling out, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:9, ESV). Mark 11:10 records the crowd saying, “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” (ESV). The NIV translates their shout as “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

The word *hosanna* comes from a Hebrew word meaning “save now” or “save us, we pray.” The first word of Psalm 118:25 is *howosiah-na*, translated “Save us!” and the crowd’s use of this word at the triumphal entry was significant—especially as they waved palm branches (Psalm 118 was associated with the [Feast of Tabernacles](#)). By saying “hosanna” as Jesus passed through the gates of Jerusalem and referring to David and David’s kingdom, the Jews were acknowledging Jesus as their Messiah. The Jews had been waiting a long time for the fulfillment of the [Davidic Covenant](#) (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17:11–14; 2 Chronicles 6:16), and their shouts of “hosanna in the highest” indicated the hope that their Messiah had finally come to set up God’s kingdom then and there (see Luke 19:11).

By saying “in the highest,” the crowd was invoking heaven’s blessing on them and the salvation that the Messiah was bringing. The phrase also echoes the song of the angels in Luke 2:14: “Glory to God in the highest” (ESV). To paraphrase the shouts of the crowd: “Save us, our Messiah, who comes to fulfill God’s mission! Save us, we beseech you, as you take your rightful throne and extend heaven’s salvation to us!”

Sadly, the salvation that the people of Jerusalem wanted that day was political, not spiritual. They were only interested in a temporary, worldly fulfillment of the messianic prophecies. They chose not to see the prophecies that said the Messiah would be “a man of sorrows” who would bear the griefs of His people and be crushed for their sins. His oppression and death were clearly predicted in Isaiah 53. Yes, Jesus was the Messiah they had been waiting for, and He accepted their shouts of “hosanna in the highest.” He was truly Immanuel, God with us (Isaiah 7:14). But the political conquest and final fulfillment of the David Covenant must await the second coming (Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 24:30; Titus 2:13). Before Jesus could take care of the political problems of His people, He had to take care of the sin problem.

As the people shouted “hosanna in the highest,” little did they know what that would actually mean. Jesus had come to save (Luke 19:10), but not in the manner they desired. “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22). Their cries for salvation and their demand that it come “now” were answered with the cross. God provided a spiritual salvation from the bondage of sin, bought at great cost to the Lord Jesus. But the blessed results of that salvation extend into eternity and far outweigh any temporary benefits we could experience in this world.

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the significance of the triumphal/triumphant entry? WATCH VIDEO](#)**

**ANSWER** - The triumphal entry is that of Jesus coming into Jerusalem on what we know as Palm Sunday, the Sunday before the crucifixion (John 12:1, 12). The story of the triumphal entry is one of the few incidents in the life of Jesus which appears in all four Gospel accounts (Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19). Putting the four accounts together, it becomes clear that the triumphal entry was a significant event, not only to the people of Jesus’ day, but to Christians throughout history. We celebrate Palm Sunday to remember that momentous occasion.

On that day, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a borrowed donkey’s colt, one that had never been ridden before. The disciples spread their cloaks on the donkey for Jesus to sit on, and the multitudes came out to welcome Him, laying before Him their cloaks and the branches of palm trees. The people hailed and praised Him as the “King who comes in the name of the Lord” as He rode to the temple, where He taught the people, healed them, and drove out the money-changers and merchants who had made His Father’s house a “den of robbers” (Mark 11:17).

Jesus’ purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public His claim to be their Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Matthew says that the King coming on the foal of a donkey was an exact fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Jesus rides into His capital city as a conquering King and is hailed by the people as such, in the manner of the day. The streets of Jerusalem, the royal city, are open to Him, and like a king He ascends to His palace, not a temporal palace but the spiritual palace that is the temple, because His is a spiritual kingdom. He receives the worship and praise of the people because only He deserves it. No longer does He tell His disciples to be quiet about Him (Matthew 12:16, 16:20) but to shout His praises and worship Him openly. The spreading of cloaks was an act of homage for royalty (see 2 Kings 9:13). Jesus was openly declaring to the people that He was their King and the Messiah they had been waiting for.

**Unfortunately, the praise the people lavished on Jesus was not because they recognized Him as their Savior from sin.** They welcomed Him out of their desire for a messianic deliverer, someone who would lead them in a revolt against Rome. There were many who, though they did not believe in Christ as Savior, nevertheless hoped that perhaps He would be to them a great temporal deliverer. These are the ones who hailed Him as King with their many hosannas, recognizing Him as the Son of David who came in the name of the Lord. But when He failed in their expectations, when He refused to lead them in a massive revolt against the Roman occupiers, the crowds quickly turned on Him. Within just a few days, their [hosannas](#) would change to cries of “Crucify Him!” (Luke 23:20-21). Those who hailed Him as a hero would soon reject and abandon Him.

The story of the triumphal entry is one of contrasts, and those contrasts contain applications to believers. It is the story of the King who came as a lowly servant on a donkey, not a prancing steed, not in royal robes, but on the clothes of the poor and humble. Jesus Christ comes not to conquer by force as earthly kings but by love, grace, mercy, and His own sacrifice for His people. His is not a kingdom of armies and splendor but of lowliness and servanthood. He conquers not nations but hearts and minds. His message is one of peace with God, not of temporal peace. If Jesus has made a triumphal entry into our hearts, He reigns there in peace and love. As His followers, we exhibit those same qualities, and the world sees the true King living and reigning in triumph in us.

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## QUESTION - [What is Palm Sunday? WATCH VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate the [triumphal entry](#) of Jesus into Jerusalem, one week before His resurrection (Matthew 21:1–11). As Jesus entered the holy city, He neared the culmination of a long journey toward Golgotha. He had come to save the lost (Luke 19:10), and now was the time—this was the place—to secure that salvation. Palm Sunday marked the start of what is often called “[Passion Week](#),” the final seven days of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Palm Sunday was the “beginning of the end” of Jesus’ work on earth.

Palm Sunday began with Jesus and His disciples traveling over the [Mount of Olives](#). The Lord sent two disciples ahead into the village of Bethphage to find an animal to ride. They found the unbroken colt of a donkey, just as Jesus had said they would (Luke 19:29–30). When they untied the colt, the owners began to question them. The disciples responded with the answer Jesus had provided: “The Lord needs it” (Luke 19:31–34). Amazingly, the owners were satisfied with that answer and let the disciples go. “They brought [the donkey] to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it” (Luke 19:35).

As Jesus ascended toward Jerusalem, a large multitude gathered around Him. This crowd understood that Jesus was the Messiah; what they did not understand was that it wasn’t time to set up the kingdom yet—although Jesus had tried to tell them so (Luke 19:11–12). The crowd’s actions along the road give rise to the name “Palm Sunday”: “A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road” (Matthew 21:8). In strewing their cloaks on the road, the people were giving Jesus the royal treatment—King Jehu was given similar honor at his coronation (2 Kings 9:13). John records the detail that the branches they cut were from palm trees (John 12:13).

On that first Palm Sunday, the people also honored Jesus verbally: “The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ / ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ / ‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’” (Matthew 21:9). In their praise of Jesus, the Jewish crowds were quoting Psalm 118:25–26, an acknowledged prophecy of the Christ. The allusion to a Messianic psalm drew resentment from the religious leaders present: “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples!’” (Luke 19:39). However, Jesus saw no need to rebuke those who told the truth. He replied, “I tell you . . . if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out” (Luke 19:40).

Some 450 to 500 years prior to Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem, the prophet Zechariah had prophesied the event we now call Palm Sunday: “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! / Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! / See, your king comes to you, / righteous and victorious, / lowly and riding on a donkey, / on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). The prophecy was fulfilled in every particular, and it was indeed a time of rejoicing, as Jerusalem welcomed their King. Unfortunately, the celebration was not to last. The crowds looked for a Messiah who would rescue them *politically* and free them *nationally*, but Jesus had come to save them *spiritually*. First things first, and mankind’s primary need is spiritual, not political, cultural, or national salvation.

Even as the coatless multitudes waved the palm branches and shouted for joy, they missed the true reason for Jesus’ presence. They could neither see nor understand the cross. That’s why, “as [Jesus] approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, ‘If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies . . . will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you’” (Luke 19:41–47). It is a tragic thing to see the Savior but not recognize Him for who He is. The crowds who were crying out “[Hosanna!](#)” on Palm Sunday were crying out “Crucify Him!” later that week (Matthew 27:22–23).

There is coming a day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10–11). The worship will be real then. Also, John records a scene in heaven that features the eternal celebration of the risen Lord: “There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were *holding palm branches in their hands*” (Revelation 7:9, emphasis added). These palm-bearing saints will shout, “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (verse 10), and who can measure sum of their joy?

### **Palm Sunday Calendar:**

2024 — March 24

2025 — April 13

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### **Who Is This?**

Read: Luke 19:28–40 | Bible in a Year: Joshua 19–21; Luke 2:25–52

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Luke 19:38

Imagine standing shoulder to shoulder with onlookers by a dirt road. The woman behind you is on her tiptoes, trying to see who is coming. In the distance, you glimpse a man riding a donkey. As He approaches, people toss their coats onto the road. Suddenly, you



hear a tree crack behind you. A man is cutting down palm branches, and people are spreading them out ahead of the donkey.

Jesus's followers zealously honored Him as He entered Jerusalem a few days before His crucifixion. The multitude rejoiced and praised God for "all the miracles they had seen" (Luke 19:37). Jesus's devotees surrounded Him, calling out, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" (v. 38). Their enthusiastic honor affected the people of Jerusalem. When Jesus finally arrived, "the whole city was stirred and asked, 'Who is this?'" (Matthew 21:10).

Lord, I want others to see You in me and to know You too.

Today, people are still curious about Jesus. Although we can't pave His way with palm branches or shout praises to Him in person, we can still honor Him. We can discuss His remarkable works, assist people in need, patiently bear insults, and love each other deeply. Then we must be ready to answer the onlookers who ask, "Who is Jesus?"

Lord, may my life and my words express what I know about who You are. I want others to see You in me and to know You too.

We honor God's name when we live like His children.

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt

INSIGHT Do you sometimes struggle with finding the right words and right time to speak about Jesus? Your concern and hesitancy may be from God. There is a time to speak and a time to be quiet (Ecclesiastes 3:7). The Spirit knows the difference. Sometimes He is in the quiet moments and thoughtful actions that prepare the way for words later. Sometimes He enables us to fill a silence so ripe for words that if we don't gently express our confidence in Jesus, it might feel as if even "the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:40). ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

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**HOSANNA** (Read Jn 12:12-19, Mt 21:9) - It's Sunday morning, time for the electronic church in America. Thousands lounge in their living rooms watching television. Almost every channel carries a religious program. Some preachers proclaim a clear-cut gospel message. Others, however, pace before an enraptured audience, telling them that Jesus will heal all their diseases and make them rich. "He wants you well! Poverty is of the devil!" shouts the preacher. And the swelling of applause picks up where he leaves off. People love the "gospel" of prosperity and deliverance from sickness.

Now turn back the calendar to a Sunday morning around 33 A.D. The city is Jerusalem. There's no TV, but there is a preacher who stirs the hopes of an excited crowd. For three years He's been going about Judea and Galilee, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and even raising the dead. Now He rides into Jerusalem on a colt, gladly receiving the acclaim of the crowd. But those who shout "Hosanna!" are accepting Him for what they think He will give them, not for who He is and what He came to do. They want an earthly Messiah who will provide for their material welfare, not a suffering Messiah whose death on the cross will expose their sin, provide forgiveness, and call for a life commitment.

Jesus didn't promise release from all the suffering in the world. But He did offer forgiveness, peace, eternal life, and a cross. Anything less than taking up that cross in serving Him is shallow allegiance.—D. J. De Haan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The word easy appears only once in the New Testament,  
and then in connection with yoke.

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### [The Problem Within](#)

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven! Matthew 21:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: Matthew 21:1–9

A few years ago, a woodpecker began tapping on the siding of our home. We thought the problem was only external. Then one day, my son and I climbed up a ladder into the attic only to have a bird fly past our startled faces. The problem was worse than we'd suspected: it was inside our house.

When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, the crowd was hoping He would be the one to fix their external problem—their oppression by the Romans. They went wild, shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (Matthew 21:9). This was the moment they'd been waiting for; God's appointed King had come. If God's chosen Deliverer was going to begin reforming things, wouldn't He start with all the wrong out there? But in most gospel accounts, the "triumphal entry" is followed by Jesus driving out exploitative moneychangers . . . from the temple (vv. 12–13). He was cleaning

house, and from the inside out.

That's what happens when we welcome Jesus as King; He comes to set things right—and He starts with us. He makes us confront the evil inside. Jesus on the donkey is like the warriors in the Trojan horse. The horse was welcomed as a symbol of peace, but its ultimate aim was unconditional surrender. Jesus our King requires the same from us. By: Glenn Packiam (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What does it mean for Jesus to be your King? Why is it vital for you to surrender your all to Him?

Dear Jesus, You're the true King. Forgive me for wanting You to only fix the problems in the world around me and not to confront the sin in my heart. Show me where I'm prone to wander and expose the ways I want to run my own life.

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## The King Has Come

Read: Luke 19:28-44

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!—Luke 19:38

An American philosopher once asked, "If Jesus and Plato should return to earth and were to lecture on the same campus at the same time, which would I go to hear?" He concluded, "Who would choose to go and hear even so great a one as Plato talk about truth, when he might listen to the One who is the Truth?"

The cheering crowd that surged around Jesus on that first Palm Sunday responded much like that philosopher. They recognized that He had no equal, yet there was something unsettling about Him. Jesus rode calmly into Jerusalem on a donkey, although a stately war horse might have better suited the occasion. He visited the temple and then returned to Bethany (Mk. 11:11). The crowd had expected much more. They sought deliverance from Roman rule, but He came to deliver from Satan's rule. They recognized that Jesus had come from God, but they completely misunderstood His spiritual mission.

Do we pay tribute to Jesus because of who He is or just for what He can do for us? To honor Him means to obey Him and to die to our self-centered nature. The philosopher recognized Him as the Truth and the crowd saw Him as their deliverer, but we are called to submit to Him as King, the One who has come to rule in our hearts.

To be a Christian is to be a loyal subject of the King of kings.

By Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## The Way To Praise Him

Read: Luke 19:28-38

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! —Luke 19:38

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem a few days before His death focused attention on Him as Lord. When Jesus sent His disciples to get the colt He was to ride, He instructed them to tell its owners, "The Lord has need of it" (Luke 19:31). And when the crowds shouted their praise, they quoted Psalm 118:26, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Luke 19:38).

Jesus is Lord. His name is "above every name" (Philippians 2:9). As part of His title, the word Lord refers to His sovereignty. He is the King, and every believer in Him is a member of His kingdom.

We acknowledge Jesus as Lord of our lives by bowing to His authority as King. This means that we live in obedience to Him. We can't be like the man who claimed to be a Christian and yet chose to use illegal drugs and live in an immoral relationship. When his minister confronted him, he glibly replied, "Don't worry, pastor. It's okay. I'm just a bad Christian."

It's not okay. Not at all! Not for a person who claims to be a follower of Christ (Luke 6:43-49).

Today, make sure you are honoring Him with your deeds as well as with your words. Then you can join with others in proclaiming, "Jesus is Lord!"

Take me as I am, Lord,  
And make me all Your own;  
Make my heart Your palace

And Your royal throne.

—Pope

If you adore Christ as Savior, you can't ignore Christ as Lord.

By David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

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### [The King's Offer](#)

The multitudes . . . cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" —Matthew 21:9

Today's Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

I have often wondered how many of those people who enthusiastically cried, "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" a few days later. Some may have been keenly disappointed, even angry, that Christ didn't use His miraculous power to establish an earthly kingdom. Hadn't He created a golden opportunity to rally popular support by parading into Jerusalem and offering Himself as King?

Many Jews failed to recognize that before Jesus would openly assert His sovereignty He had to rule in their hearts. Their greatest need was not to be freed from Caesar's rule but to be released from the chains of pride, self-righteousness, and rebellion against God. They wanted the visible kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament with all its material benefits. But the Messiah first had to die for the sins of mankind and rise again to establish the basis for a spiritual rule.

The issue is the same today. Christ does not offer immunity from life's hardships, a cure for every disease, or the promise of financial success. What the King offered then is what He offers today—Himself as the sacrifice for our sins, and a challenge to serve Him. If we accept His offer, we will not be disappointed. By: Dennis J. DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

There's no disappointment in Jesus,  
He's all that He promised to be;  
His love and His care comfort me everywhere;  
He is no disappointment to me.  
—Hallett

Putting Christ first brings satisfaction that lasts.

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**ISAIAH 9:6** - When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the crowds cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Mt 21:9). Later that same week, however, a mob called for His crucifixion (Mt 27:22). Few people recognized Him as the one Isaiah described as Wonderful (Isa 9:6).

If there is anyone who deserves that name, it is Jesus. He is wonderful in His deity and in His selfless love that led Him from the shining glories of heaven into the darkness of this sin-cursed world. He is wonderful in His virgin birth, wonderful in His overcoming, sinless life of service, wonderful in His teachings, wonderful in His vicarious death, wonderful in His astounding resurrection, and wonderful in His ascended glory.

Someone has observed, "In Christ we have a love that can never be fathomed, a peace that can never be understood, a rest that can never be disturbed, a joy that can never be diminished, a hope that can never be disappointed, and a spiritual resource that can never be exhausted." —H. G. Bosch (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

THE VICTIM OF CALVARY  
BECAME THE VICTOR OF EASTER.

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### [Man Of Contrasts](#)

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! — Matthew 21:9

Today's Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

On that first Palm Sunday, one might have expected Jesus the King to enter Jerusalem on a mighty steed. But He chose instead a

lowly donkey. Before He could come as a King to reign, He had to come as a Savior to die. Throughout His life on earth, Jesus was a man of striking contrasts—reflecting both His genuine humanity and His full deity.

Someone once wrote this about Jesus: “He who is the Bread of Life began His ministry hungering. He who is the Water of Life ended His ministry thirsting. Christ hungered as a man, yet fed the hungry as God. He was weary, yet He is our rest. He paid tribute, yet He is the King. He was called a devil, but He cast out demons. He prayed, yet He hears prayer. He wept, and He dries our tears. He was sold for 30 pieces of silver, yet He redeems sinners. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet He is the Good Shepherd. He gave His life, and by dying He destroyed death.”

We would expect to find such contrasts in the life of One who was fully God and fully man. Jesus, who is the sovereign Lord of the universe, became a man to provide for our redemption. But one day He will return as King of kings.

Jesus, the God-man, deserves all our praise. — Richard DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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**From Hosanna to Crucify** - (John 12:12-13). Sometimes I wonder how many of those who enthusiastically cried, "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday were shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" a few days later. People must have been disappointed, even resentful, that Christ didn't overthrow the Romans and set up an earthly kingdom. He had had a golden opportunity to rally support as He rode into Jerusalem. In contrast to His earlier actions, He didn't try to dampen this jubilant demonstration. Yet neither did he capitalize on the fervor of the crowd and issue a call to arms. Those who longed only for release from foreign domination were disillusioned. The Messiah had not fulfilled their expectations.

Jesus' contemporaries failed to recognize that before He could assert His outward sovereignty, He had to rule the inner citadel of their hearts. The Jews' greatest need was not freedom from Caesar's legions but release from the chains of their own sin. Jesus would rule in power and glory one day, but first He had to pay sin's penalty on the cross. The key to His kingdom was not revolution but repentance.

Through the centuries the issue has not changed. If we follow Christ only because we think He'll shield us from life's hardships, heal all our sicknesses, and guarantee prosperity, we're headed for disillusionment. But if we renounce sin, take up our cross, and live for Him because He is our God, our Creator, and our Redeemer, we will never be disappointed in Him. —D. J. De Haan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Putting Christ first brings satisfaction that lasts.

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## Who Is This?

Read: Luke 19:28-40

Blessed is [He] who comes in the name of the Lord! —Luke 19:38

Imagine standing shoulder to shoulder with onlookers by a dirt road. The woman behind you is on her tiptoes, trying to see who is coming. In the distance, you glimpse a man riding a donkey. As He approaches, people toss their coats onto the road. Suddenly, you hear a tree crack behind you. A man is cutting down palm branches, and people are spreading them out ahead of the donkey.

Jesus' followers zealously honored Him as He entered Jerusalem a few days before His crucifixion. The multitude rejoiced and praised God for "all the mighty works they had seen" (Luke 19:37). Jesus' devotees surrounded Him, calling out, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (v.38). Their enthusiastic honor affected the people of Jerusalem. When Jesus finally arrived, "all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?'" (Matt. 21:10).

Today, people are still curious about Jesus. Although we can't pave His way with palm branches or shout praises to Him in person, we can still honor Him. We can discuss His remarkable works, assist people in need (Gal. 6:2), patiently bear insults (1 Peter 4:14-16), and love each other deeply (v.8). Then we must be ready to answer the onlookers who ask, "Who is Jesus?"

So let our lips and lives express The holy gospel we profess; So let our works and virtues shine, To prove the doctrine all divine. — Watts

We honor God's name when we call Him our Father and live like His Son.

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

## Matthew 21:10 When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?"

- **all:** Mt 2:3 Ru 1:19 1Sa 16:4 Joh 12:16-19
- **Who:** Song 3:6 Isa 63:1 Lu 5:21 7:49 9:9 20:2 Joh 2:18 Ac 9:5

### Related Passages:

Isaiah 63:1+ (MESSIANIC PROPHECY OF SECOND COMING) **WHO IS THIS** who comes from [Edom](#), With garments of glowing colors [from Bozrah](#), This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

## WHO IS THIS?

**When He had entered ([eiserchomai](#)) Jerusalem, all the city was stirred ([seio](#) - shaken, thrown into an uproar, in turmoil), saying, "Who is this?"** - Jesus' arrival shook the city. When He comes the second time, His coming will shake things up, for He will split the Mount of Olives and save the city from the enemies of Israel! (Zech 14:1-4+)

**Moore** writes "By the time Jesus makes it through the city gates, everyone is buzzing about him. The NIV translation of Mt 21:10, "The whole city was stirred" is somewhat understated. The word translated "**stirred**" is used elsewhere in reference to the shaking of an earthquake (Mt 27:51; Rev 6:13). The Jerusalem residents and the Passover pilgrims ask those at the head of the parade, "**Who is this?**" "Jesus the prophet from Nazareth" is all the answer they need and the one they already suspect. (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos](#) or [book format](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - He had been there before, but not on this way. Never had such enthusiastic multitudes surrounded Him with acclamations. Quiet citizens, who had not quitted their homes, wondered at the crowd. Great numbers had been moved by some uncontrollable impulse to go out to meet Jesus, and, when He was come into Jerusalem, still greater crowds were attracted, all the city was moved. There is nothing that can "move" mankind like the coming of Christ. Everyone enquired, "**Who is this?**" It may have been in some an idle curiosity, and in others a fleeting interest; but it was far better than the dull indifference which cares for none of these things. Where Jesus comes he makes a stir, and raises enquiry. "**Who is this?**" is a proper, profitable, personal, pressing question. Let our reader make this enquiry concerning Jesus, and never rest till he knows the answer. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

## Matthew 21:11 And the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."

- **This:** Mt 16:13,14 De 18:15-19 Lu 7:16 Joh 7:40 9:17 Ac 3:22,23 7:37
- **Nazareth:** Mt 2:23 Joh 1:45-46 6:14

### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 18:15-19+ "The LORD your **God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among you**, from your countrymen, **you shall listen to Him**. 16 "This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.' 17 "The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. 18 **I will raise up a Prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him**. 19 'It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which He shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

Matthew 2:23+ and came and lived in a city called **Nazareth**. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a [Nazarene](#)."

John 1:45-46+ Philip \*found ([historical present tense](#)) Nathanael and \*said([historical present tense](#)) to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—**Jesus of Nazareth**, the son of Joseph." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of **Nazareth?**" (ANSWER? YES, THE BEST THING EVER!) Philip \*said ([historical present tense](#)) to him, "Come and see."

**And the crowds were saying** (imperfect tense - kept saying over and over), "**This is the prophet ([prophetes](#)) Jesus ([lesous](#)), [from Nazareth](#) in [Galilee](#)** - Notice the shift from the acclamation on His entry as "King" now to "Prophet." Note that even in using



this designation the crowds are alluding to Moses' OT Messianic Prophecy. He was called the [Nazarene](#) because He hailed from Nazareth, which was also a fulfillment of what had been spoken through the prophets (Mt 2:23+).

**C H Spurgeon** - Everyone who had entered the city in the royal procession was prepared to inform inquiring citizens. The multitude said; that is to say, the answer was unanimous: "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." The answer was true, but not all the truth. Seldom is a multitude so well informed as in this instance. Christ's name, His office, His early abode, and His lowly race are all indicated. Those who wished to know more about him had in the answer of the multitude the keys of all that it was needful for them to discover. Oh, that our teeming populations knew as much of Jesus as the multitudes of Jerusalem knew! And yet it may be that, if they did, they might act as basely as did these sinners of Jerusalem, when their Hosannas were so soon changed into cruel cries of "Away with him! Crucify him!" (John 19:15+) ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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#### QUESTION - [Why is Jesus often referred to as Jesus of Nazareth?](#) | [GotQuestions](#)

**ANSWER:** Jesus was referred to as "Jesus of Nazareth" for several reasons. For one thing, in Bible times people were often identified by their native area or place of residence. The man who carried Jesus' cross when He was no longer able to, for example, was called Simon of Cyrene, noting his name and his place of residence (Luke 23:26). This distinguishes him from all other Simons and from all other residents of Cyrene who were not named Simon. Although Bethlehem was the place of Jesus' birth, Nazareth was the place where Jesus had lived until He began His public ministry, and therefore He is said to be "of Nazareth."

Matthew 2:23+ tells us that Joseph settled his family in Nazareth—after returning from Egypt where he had fled to protect Jesus from Herod—in order to fulfill "what was said through the prophets: 'He will be called a Nazarene.'" The words here are not found in any of the books of the Old Testament, and there has been much difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of this passage. Most commentators agree that the prophecies respecting the coming Messiah were that He was to be of humble origin and would be despised and rejected (Isaiah 53; Psalm 22) and that the phrase "he shall be called" means the same as "He shall be." When Matthew says, therefore, that the prophecies were "fulfilled," his meaning is that the predictions of the prophets that the Messiah would be of a low and despised condition and would be rejected, were fully accomplished in His being an inhabitant of Nazareth.

The phrase "**Jesus of Nazareth**" is first used in the Bible by Phillip who, after being called by Jesus to follow Him, told Nathanael, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). By calling Him Jesus of Nazareth, Phillip may also have been making a statement about the lowliness of His birth. The character of the people of Nazareth was such that they were despised and condemned. Nathanael's response, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (John 1:46) would seem to indicate such. To come from Nazareth, therefore, or to be a [Nazarene](#), was the same as to be despised, or to be esteemed of low birth. The Messiah who would come to save His people would be "a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness" (Isaiah 53:2). He would be "despised and rejected of men" from whom men hid their faces and "esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:3).

Jesus of Nazareth was born and grew up in humble circumstances, but His impact on the world has been greater than anyone ever born before or since. He came to "save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21), a feat that could be accomplished by none other than God incarnate.

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#### QUESTION - [Who is the Prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15–19?](#) | [GotQuestions?](#)

**ANSWER** - Deuteronomy is the account of [Moses'](#) teaching of the law to the generation of Israel after their 40-year wilderness wandering. As part of his instruction to Israel, he speaks of a coming prophet: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, 'Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die'" (Deuteronomy 18:15–16).

In Deuteronomy 18 Moses warns the people against imitating other nations and falling into idolatry (Deuteronomy 18:9). Moses reminds the people of specific practices they should avoid and how God would judge the people who engage in them (Deuteronomy 18:10–12). Israel was to be distinct—holy and blameless—gaining their approval from God and not from other nations (Deuteronomy 18:13). Those nations listened to falsehood and engaged in detestable practices (Deuteronomy 18:14). Israel was not to do that.

In order to ensure that Israel would know God's direction, He would raise up for Israel [a prophet like Moses](#) (Deuteronomy 18:15a). The context provides some hints as to who this prophet is. This prophet would be one of their countrymen, and they should listen to him (Deuteronomy 18:15b). Moses explains that this was a concession on God's part. The people were terrified when God appeared at Mount Sinai (in Horeb) and asked that God speak to them through an intermediary (Exodus 20:18–19). God was gracious to the people and commended them for fearing Him (Deuteronomy 18:16–17). Moses recounts how God told him that God would raise up a prophet and put His words in that prophet's mouth (Deuteronomy 18:18). Anyone who would not listen to the prophet would be

accountable to God (Deuteronomy 18:19).

As Israel waited for this prophet, God warned that there would be false prophets who would speak in the name of other gods. Those false prophets would be worthy of death (Deuteronomy 18:20). The people of Israel could recognize false prophets by whether or not their prophecies came to pass (Deuteronomy 18:21).

The reference to “a prophet” in Deuteronomy 18:15–19 could be fulfilled by any of the prophets that God would send to the nation. However, the expectation of the people was clearly that God would send one particular prophet. They looked forward to that. When [John the Baptist](#) came, the people asked him if he was *the* prophet (John 1:21). John explained that he was not the prophet. The One that John was announcing was the Messiah, the prophet for whom the people were waiting (John 1:26–30). Peter connected the role of Messiah with that prophet and affirmed that Jesus was the Expected One (Acts 3:20–26).

While God spoke to Israel through many prophets over the years (Acts 3:24), in the latter days God spoke through His Son (Hebrews 1:1). Jesus is the ultimate Prophet and best epitomizes the prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15–19. He spoke of things to come, announcing His coming kingdom. He revealed and explained His Father (John 1:18; 14:10–11). He provided an incredible panorama of the future and offered a blessing to all who hear and heed His word (Revelation 1:3). All who believe in Him will have eternal life (John 6:47), and no one who believes in Him will be disappointed or disturbed (Isaiah 28:16). This Prophet is trustworthy because He is much more than simply a prophet. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). The people understood that this meant He was God (John 5:18).

**Matthew 21:12 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves.**

KJV Matthew 21:12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

BGT Matthew 21:12 Κα ε σ λθεν η σο ς ε ς τ ε ρ ν κα ξ βαλε ν π ντας το ς πωλο ντας κα γο ρ ζοντας ν τ ε ρ , κα τ ς τρα π ζας τ ν κολλυβιστ ν κα τ στρε ψεν κα τ ς καθ δρας τ ν πωλο ντων τ ς περιστερ ς,

NET Matthew 21:12 Then Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those who were selling and buying in the temple courts, and turned over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves.

CSB Matthew 21:12 Jesus went into the temple complex and drove out all those buying and selling in the temple. He overturned the money changers' tables and the chairs of those selling doves.

ESV Matthew 21:12 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

NIV Matthew 21:12 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.

NLT Matthew 21:12 Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out all the people buying and selling animals for sacrifice. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves.

- **entered the temple:** Mal 3:1,2 Mk 11:11
- **drove out all those:** Mk 11:15 Lu 19:45-46 Joh 2:14-17
- **money changers:** De 14:24-26
- **doves:** Lev 1:14 5:7,11 12:6,8 14:22,30 15:14,29 Lu 2:24
- See M. Moulton [“Jesus’ Goal for Temple and Tree: A Thematic Revisit of Matt 21:12–22,” JETS 41/4 \(1998\)](#)

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:15+ Then they \*came ([historical present](#)) to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; **(AND INDICATIVE OF JESUS’ COMPLETE CONTROL AND AUTHORITY)** 16 He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.

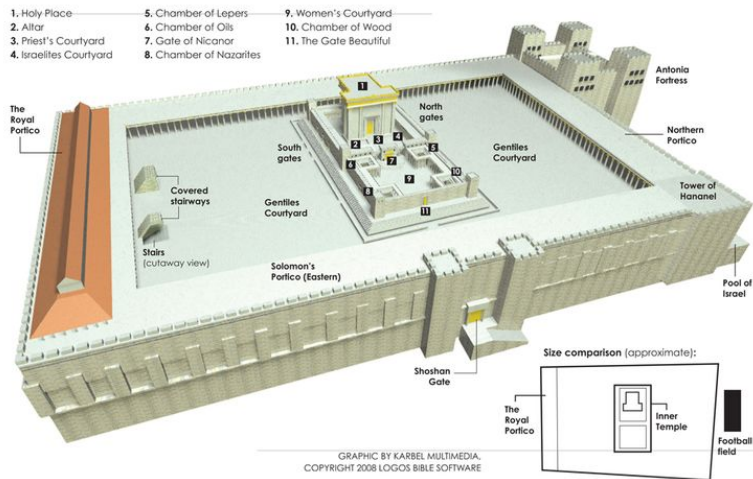
Luke 19:45-46+ Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, 46 saying to them, “It is written, ‘AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,’ but you have made it a ROBBERS’ DEN.”

John 2:14-17+ And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money

changers seated at their tables. 15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; 16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."

## Herod's Temple

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple wasn't completed until approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



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## JESUS ASSERTS HIS AUTHORITY IN TEMPLE

**And** - After ascending the hill from the Kishon Valley the first gate Jesus comes to, when entering Jerusalem from the east, leads right into the temple court, that is, the [court of the Gentiles](#) as shown in the depiction above.

**Jesus entered** ([eiserchomai](#)) **the temple** ([hieros](#)) **and drove out** ([ekballō](#)) **all those who were buying** ([agorazo](#)) **and selling** ([poleo](#)) **in the temple** ([hieros](#)), **and overturned the tables** ([trapeza](#)) **of the money changers** ([kollubistes](#)) **and the seats of those who were selling** ([poleo](#)) **doves** - Jesus entered the temple and went to the [court of the Gentiles](#) where these nefarious businesses were located ([see picture of Herod's temple with court of Gentiles on right side](#))

**Gilbrant** - Since the Law required every Jewish male 20 years and older to pay a half-shekel, money changers were needed for exchanging foreign money into traditional Jewish coinage in order to pay what evidently had become an annual tax. Because Jews would travel to Jerusalem from all parts of the Roman Empire, currency from their home countries was converted to the currency used in Jerusalem. Jesus' epithet "**den of robbers**" (cf. Jer 7:11) may reflect the high exchange rate charged for this service—nearly 10 percent. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**John MacArthur** gives some background on the business in the Temple - The business enterprises in the [Court of the Gentiles](#) came to be known as the "Bazaar of Annas," whose chief priests and other associates oversaw the Temple franchises. Merchants would buy rights to a concession for selling sacrificial animals, wine, oil, or salt, or for exchanging money into the proper currency and denominations used in Temple offerings. In addition to the franchise fees the operators would often be required to pay a certain percentage of their profits to Annas. According to levitical law, any animal approved by the priests could be offered in the Temple. But the chief priests made certain that animals not bought in one of their franchises would be judged unacceptable, giving their concessionaires the de facto right to provide all the animals. According to the Jewish-Christian historian Alfred Edersheim, a person would often have to pay as much as ten times what an animal normally cost. As if that extortion were not enough, those who needed to have foreign currency exchanged or who had to have their money converted into the exact amount for an offering were charged a twenty-five percent fee. Jesus was therefore speaking quite literally when He called the Temple marketplace "a robbers' den" (v. 13)....It was in part out of Martin Luther's [great hatred of indulgences](#), the supposed buying of God's grace for money, that the Protestant Reformation was born. Believers today should cry out as Luther did for Christ to cleanse the church of its many modern defilements, including making merchandise of the gospel. Judgment still must "begin with the household of God" (1 Pet. 4:17). (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 268](#))

**NET NOTE** - The merchants (those who were selling) would have been located in the [Court of the Gentiles](#). Matthew (here, Mt

21:12–27), Mark (Mk 11:15–19) and Luke (Lk 19:45–46) record this incident of the temple cleansing at the end of Jesus' ministry. John (Jn 2:13–16) records a cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. See the note on the word temple courts in John 2:14 for a discussion of the relationship of these accounts to one another.

**C H Spurgeon** -Jesus went into the temple of God again, as he did at the beginning of his ministry. Then the reforming Prophet intimated what was needed, and now the King proceeds to carry it out. A temple dedicated to God must not become a place of merchandise and robbery. Jesus.. cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple. The sellers were the more permanently obstructive, the more constantly offensive, so they were driven out first: but as there would have been no sellers if these had not been buyers, they must be cast out also. Those who kept the tables of the moneychangers might have pleaded that they were there for the public convenience, since they supplied shekels and other moneys of the sanctuary in lieu of Roman coin. The seats of them that sold doves seemed licensed, since they dealt in a young pigeons and turtle doves for the sacrifices. But these traders were not in this serving God, but making profit for themselves, and therefore our Lord overthrew all their arrangements, and cleared the holy place. What an awe must have surrounded this one Man, that the whole tribe of traffickers should flee before him while he, endured the overturning of their tables and their seats! Neither the temple guard, nor the Roman soldiers appear to have interfered in any way. When Jesus takes to himself power, opposition ceases. What a prophecy this incident affords of the sense with which, in his Second Advent, he will purge his floor with the fan in his hand! ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** gives a vivid description of the corrupt, horrific state of the [Court of the Gentiles](#)...

The [Court of the Gentiles](#) had been turned into basically a business center. And the business was selling animals needed for the sacrifices (twice daily and then the Passover). One Passover record indicates 260,000 lambs were slain, so you can just imagine how many animals would have been in the courtyard! And you had to buy other necessities for offerings and sacrifices. Then there were [moneychangers](#). All of this was basically called the Bazaar of Annas (**ED**: [SEE ALFRED EDERSHEIM](#) = "The Temple-market and the *Bazaars of the sons of Annas* are identical"). Annas and Caiaphas both being high priests ran the operation and became filthy rich selling franchises to people who sold the animals and changed the money and sold the oil and the other things that were used. They sold these franchises for very high prices and then skimmed off a huge percentage of the profit of shop owners, so that the Court of the Gentiles was just jammed with these shops. Lightfoot writes there was always a constant market in the Temple in that place ([THE COURT OF THE GENTILES](#))....One might ask, "Well why don't they bring their own animals?" They should and they could choose the best one in the flock without spot and without blemish. But if you brought your own animal, it was risky because every animal that was sacrificed had to pass priestly inspection. And it was to the benefit of the priests to reject your animal because when they rejected your animal, you had to buy their animal. And you would be forced to do that at an exorbitant price, and a huge percentage would be skimmed off and paid to the chief priests. And if they rejected your animal, some records say you would have to pay ten times the fair price. This is robbery and extortion by the priests. The noise, the filth, the stench of all the animals, the chaos of a stockyard in the Temple of God was nauseating to Christ – the corruption, the robbery, the thievery, by people who had no conscience about bilking the poor. And there were sellers of doves and pigeons because there were some people so poor they could not afford a lamb, so according to Leviticus 12:6,8 the poor people could offer two doves. Doves would be worthy in today's money about a dime each but they would cost about \$10 each there. The travesty, the prostitution, the perversion, the corruption was just vile and blatant. Then there were the moneychangers, *kollubos* is the word that is a part of the word "moneychangers." It means "small coins." Every Jew had to pay a half-shekel temple tax near the Passover time. A month before, you could pay it locally, but if you got to Jerusalem and you had not paid it, you had to pay it in the Temple, and you had to pay it with a certain required coinage. And if you did not have the exact amount, then you had to change your money, and they charged you 25% to change money. The whole "Bazaar of Annas" was vile and had become a hangout for every crook, charlatan, conman of all sorts plying their trade. That is where Jesus went. Religion was corrupt. That is where He gave His attention. He was repulsed by what He saw and smelled and heard. Jesus was on His turf. "My house," He says in Lk 19:46 quoting from Isaiah 56:7, "You have brought your corruption into My house."...He goes to defend God and God's house against the blasphemers. ([Sermon](#))

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**Temple** (2413) is the Greek word [hieros](#) and adjective which in the neuter singular is [hieron](#) (as found in Friberg's definition below) to which **A H Strong** assigned a different number 2411. **Hieros** is defined by **Louw-Nida** as "pertaining to being appropriate for the expression of worship and reverence." In 1 Cor 9:13 **hieros** refers to the activities in the Temple involving the performance of various rituals. In 2 Ti 3:15 **hieros** refers to the "sacred writings" (the Holy Scriptures which in context would be the OT Scriptures as that was all that was available to the Jews).

**Friberg** on **hieros** (*hieros, a, on*) - (1) with a basic meaning what belongs to divinity, sacred, holy (2Ti 3.15), opposite **bebelos** (profane); (2) **substantially**; (a) **to hieron** = as a sacred enclosed area under the protection of a god temple (Acts 19.27); (b) predominately of the Temple of God at Jerusalem, including the whole sacred area with its buildings, courts, walls, and gates ( Mt 21.12); (c) *ta hiera* = as everything that belongs to the Temple and its service the holy or sacred things (1 Cor 9.13)

**Vine** merges **hieros** and **hieron** writing that "**hieros** is an adjective that denotes "consecrated to God," e.g., the Scriptures, 2 Ti 3:15....The neuter singular **hieron** denotes a Temple."

**BDAG** has separate definitions listed for **hieros** and **hieron**, summarized as follows

**[BDAG] HIERON** (substantive neuter of the adjective **hieros**) sanctuary, temple (a) of Gr-Rom. temples; the temple of Artemis at Ephesus Acts 19:27. (b) of the temple at Jerusalem, including the whole temple precinct w. its buildings, courts, etc. (c) in a general sense, whether polytheistic or monotheistic: 1 Cor 9:13

**[BDAG] HIEROS** - (1) pert. to being of transcendent purity, holy, adj.. Holy hands, that touch nothing profane 1 Cl 33:4; (2) belonging to the temple and its service, holy thing, subst. *ta hiera*,

Hieros - 74x in 69v - sacred(1), sacred services(1), temple(71). Matt. 4:5; Matt. 12:5; Matt. 12:6; Matt. 21:12; Matt. 21:14; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 21:23; Matt. 24:1; Matt. 26:55; Mk. 11:11; Mk. 11:15; Mk. 11:16; Mk. 11:27; Mk. 12:35; Mk. 13:1; Mk. 13:3; Mk. 14:49; Mk. 16:8; Lk. 2:27; Lk. 2:37; Lk. 2:46; Lk. 4:9; Lk. 18:10; Lk. 19:45; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:1; Lk. 21:5; Lk. 21:37; Lk. 21:38; Lk. 22:52; Lk. 22:53; Lk. 24:53; Jn. 2:14; Jn. 2:15; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 7:14; Jn. 7:28; Jn. 8:2; Jn. 8:20; Jn. 8:59; Jn. 10:23; Jn. 11:56; Jn. 18:20; Acts 2:46; Acts 3:1+; Acts 3:2; Acts 3:3; Acts 3:8; Acts 3:10; Acts 4:1; Acts 5:20; Acts 5:21; Acts 5:24; Acts 5:25; Acts 5:42; Acts 19:27; Acts 21:26; Acts 21:27; Acts 21:28; Acts 21:29; Acts 21:30; Acts 22:17; Acts 24:6; Acts 24:12; Acts 24:18; Acts 25:8; Acts 26:21; 1 Co. 9:13; 2 Tim. 3:15

**Naos** refers to the **Temple proper**, including the inner sanctuary, composed of the outer room, the **Holy of Holies** and the innermost **Holy Place**. When our Lord taught in the Temple, He taught in the **hieron**, in one of the temple porches. He expelled the money-changers from the **hieron**, the **court of the Gentiles**. When the veil of the temple was rent at the time of the death of our Lord (Mt 27:52), it was the veil of the **naos**, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. When Zacharias entered the temple to burn incense (Lk 1:9+), he entered the **naos**, the Holy Place where the altar of incense stood while the multitude were in prayer outside he people were "without," in the **hieron** (Lk 1:10+). Jesus used **naos** in a figurative to refer to His body as a temple (Jn 2:19, 20, 21). Paul extends this meaning to the individual believer's body as the dwelling place or inner sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (1 Co 6:19), the inner sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.

**Money changers** (2855)(**kollubistes** from **kollubos** = a small coin or rate of change) which Vine says is literally "money-clipper!" Louw-Nida = "one who exchanges currency, either in terms of different types of currency or different values of the same currency." Used 3x in NT - Mt. 21:12; Mk. 11:15; Jn. 2:15

**Gilbrant - Kollubistēs** is related to **kollubos**, "a small coin," plus **-tēs**, a word ending that indicates one who does something. Consequently, a **kollubistēs** is "one who works with money." The term does not appear in the Septuagint and is used in the New Testament only in connection with Jesus' cleansings of the temple (Mt. 21:12; Mk. 11:15; Jn. 2:15)....Interestingly John's Gospel also uses another word in Jn 2:14 for money changer: **kermatistēs**. It appears only here in the New Testament and not at all in the Septuagint. Like **kollubistēs**, it is made up of a word for small coin, **kerma** (2743), and **-tēs**, the suffix denoting agent. John used them as synonyms for the purposes of this account. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

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**Matthew Henry Concise - Mt 21:12-17.** Christ found some of the courts of the temple turned into a market for cattle and things used in the sacrifices, and partly occupied by the money-changers. Our Lord drove them from the place, as he had done at his entering upon his ministry, John 2:13-17. His works testified of him more than the hosannas; and his healing in the temple was the fulfilling the promise, that the glory of the latter house should be greater than the glory of the former. If Christ came now into many parts of his visible church, how many secret evils he would discover and cleanse! And how many things daily practised under the cloak of religion, would he show to be more suitable to a den of thieves than to a house of prayer!

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**QUESTION - [What does it mean that the house of prayer had been turned into a den of thieves?](#)**

**ANSWER** - About a week before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus went into the [temple and cleared it](#) out of "all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves" (Matthew 21:12). Jesus then spoke to the startled crowds: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (verse 22, KJV). The same incident is recorded in Mark 11 and Luke 19. John 2 records similar actions of Jesus at the beginning of His ministry.



In speaking of a “house of prayer” and a “den of thieves” (the NIV has “den of robbers”), Jesus cited two passages from the [Tanakh](#). In Isaiah 56:7 God says, “These [faithful foreigners] 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; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Twice in this verse, God’s temple is called “a house of prayer.” God’s design was for His house in Jerusalem to be a gathering place for worshipers from all nations, a place where prayers would rise like incense from the hearts of the faithful to the presence of the living God.

The phrase *den of thieves* comes from Jeremiah 7:11, where God says, “Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.” The prophet Jeremiah was rebuking the temple leaders for their abuses. Even as they continued going through the motions of their religion, they were oppressing the needy and violently taking what was not theirs. God saw through their pretense, however, and promised to deal with the thieves in His sanctified house.

Jesus takes these two verses from the Old Testament and applies them to His day. One verse was full of purity and promise: God’s temple would be an inviting house of prayer. The other verse was full of conviction and warning: people had perverted God’s right purposes for their own gain. In the courts of the temple, people were being taken financial advantage of, being cheated through exorbitant exchange rates and being compelled to buy “temple-approved” animals for sacrifice, on the pretext that their own animals were unworthy. Jesus denounced such greedy goings-on and physically put a stop to the corruption. In His righteous indignation, He quoted Isaiah and Jeremiah to show that He had biblical warrant for His actions. What should have been a sanctuary for the righteous had become a refuge for the wicked, and the Son of God was not going to put up with it. God’s design for the temple was that it be a house of prayer, a place to meet with God and worship Him. But when Jesus stepped into its courts, He found not prayer but avarice, extortion, and oppression.

It’s always good to remember the Lord’s purpose for what He makes. Whether it’s the temple, the church, marriage, the family, or life itself, we should follow God’s design and seek to honor Him. Any twisting or perverting of God’s design for selfish purposes will draw the Lord’s righteous anger.

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**QUESTION - [How many times did Jesus cleanse the temple? Why did He cleanse the temple?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Jesus cleansed the temple of the money-changers and sellers of merchandise because of His disgust at what they had made of God’s house of prayer and His [zeal](#) to purify it from the abuse of ungodly men. Judea was under the rule of the Romans, and the money in current use was Roman coin. However, the Jewish law required that every man should pay a tribute to the service of the sanctuary of “half a shekel” (Exodus 30:11–16), a Jewish coin. It became, therefore, a matter of convenience to have a place where the Roman coin could be exchanged for the Jewish half shekel. The money-changers provided this convenience but would demand a small sum for the exchange. Because so many thousands of people came up to the great feasts, changing money was a very profitable business and one that resulted in fraud and oppression of the poor.

Also, according to the Law, two doves or pigeons were required to be offered in sacrifice (Leviticus 14:22; Luke 2:24). Yet it was difficult to bring them from the distant parts of Judea, so a lucrative business selling the birds sprang up, with the sellers gouging the faithful by charging exorbitant prices. There were other merchants selling cattle and sheep for the temple sacrifices as well. Because of these sellers who preyed on the poor and because of His passion for the purity of His Father’s house, Jesus was filled with righteous indignation. As He overturned the tables of the money-changers, He condemned them for having turned God’s house of prayer into “a den of thieves” (Matthew 21:13). As He did so, His disciples remembered Psalm 69:9, “Zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.”

Jesus’ first cleansing of the temple is described in John 2:11–12 as having occurred just after Jesus’ first miracle, the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana. John makes it clear that it was “after this” that He went to Capernaum, where He “stayed for a few days.” Then in the next verse (verse 13), John tells us that the “Passover of the Jews was at hand” (NKJV). These verses trace Jesus’ movements over a short period of time from Cana in Galilee to Capernaum and eventually to Jerusalem for the Passover. This is the first of the two times Jesus cleansed the temple. The [Synoptic Gospels](#) do not record the temple cleansing mentioned in [John 2](#), instead only recording the temple cleansing that occurred during Passion Week.

The second cleansing of the temple occurred just after Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem the last week of His life. This second cleansing is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke but not in John. There are differences in the two events, aside from their being nearly three years apart. In the first cleansing, temple officials confronted Jesus immediately (John 2:18), whereas in the second cleansing, the chief priests and scribes confronted Him the following day (Matthew 21:17–23). In the first event, Jesus made a whip of cords with which to drive out the sellers, but there is no mention of a whip in the second cleansing. So there are two recorded occasions when Jesus cleansed the temple—the first time at the beginning of His public ministry, and the second time just after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem shortly before He was crucified. [GotQuestions.org](#)

## Related Resources:

- [Alfred Edersheim - The Cleansing of the Temple](#) (based on John 2:13-15)
- [Why does God call His house a house of prayer \(Isaiah 56:7\)?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus overturns tables \(John 2:15\)?](#)
- [Was Jesus ever angry?](#)
- [Who were the money changers in the Bible?](#)
- [What does it mean that “zeal for your house will consume me” in John 2:17?](#)
- [What is a biblical theology of worship?](#)
- [Are any of the various worship styles unbiblical?](#)
- [What are the ingredients to a truly biblical worship service?](#)
- [What is true worship?](#)
- [How much of a role should media have in worship services?](#)
- [What is the meaning of Christian worship?](#)
- [How can I know how to properly worship God?](#)

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## Bruce Barton - CHEAP WORSHIP

We have so many opportunities for worship that we may trivialize its importance. We frankly have a difficult time identifying with believers elsewhere in the world who worship under threat of pain, imprisonment, even death. The faith of these believers is portrayed by exuberance, seriousness, and reverence in worship, despite their environment. Too often for us, worship seems to be nothing more than Christians getting together for fellowship, to learn from each other, and to help each other. While all that is good, it may not be true worship. If God is not the focus, the church is in danger of becoming nothing more than a service club.

Then what is true worship? True worship focuses on God, the one who is to be worshiped. When Christians gather to worship—that is, to meet with God—then their deepest needs and hungers are satisfied, for they are in touch with the Creator.

We dare not cheapen this truly miraculous and intimate privilege called worship. Jesus was angered by actions and attitudes that cheapened worship, and we must take care not to let such actions and attitudes into our church. How would Jesus respond to the worship in your church if he were to visit this Sunday? (BORROW [Life application New Testament commentary](#))

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## Garbage In The Temple

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? —1 Corinthians 6:19<sup>+</sup>

Today's Scripture: John 2:13-22<sup>+</sup>

A number of years ago, a government investigation discovered that some truckers were hauling garbage in the same refrigerated trucks that were used to transport food. Part of the problem was that trucks making long trips could not afford to return empty.

According to the truckers, some considered garbage a dream commodity. They were paid to transport something that couldn't be damaged. During congressional hearings, a food science professor likened the problem to serving potato salad from a cat's litter box.

This “pollution for profit” scandal is nothing compared to the one described in John 2:13-22. Jesus cast out the money changers from the temple because their schemes for financial gain had desecrated His Father's house. But just as bad is polluting the temple of our bodies with thoughts and practices that don't belong there (1 Corinthians 6:19<sup>+</sup>).

In many ways, we are no better than those truckers or the temple merchants of Jesus' day. We think it would be more profitable for us to carry the garbage of this world's values in our minds. May God forgive us, cleanse us, and help us to cast out everything that defiles the temple in which He alone has the right to dwell. — Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help us love what's good and right—

O make us pure within;

And give us courage to repent

When we would choose to sin.

—D. De Haan

Christians must live in the world, but not let the world live in them.

**Matthew 21:13 And He \*said to them, “It is written, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER’; but you are making it a ROBBERS’ DEN.”**

KJV Matthew 21:13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

BGT Matthew 21:13 καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· ὡς γράπεται· οἶκος μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται, μέσῃ δὲ αὐτὴν ποιεῖτε σπλῆιον λστυ.

NET Matthew 21:13 And he said to them, "It is written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are turning it into a den of robbers!"

CSB Matthew 21:13 And He said to them, "It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer. But you are making it a den of thieves!"

ESV Matthew 21:13 He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

NIV Matthew 21:13 "It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.' "

NLT Matthew 21:13 He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves!"

- **It is written** Mt 2:5 Joh 15:25
- **MY HOUSE:** Ps 93:5 Isa 56:7
- **you are making it:** Jer 7:11 Mk 11:17 Lu 19:46

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:17,18+ And He began to teach and say to them, “Is it not written, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR **(MARK'S VERSION ADDS THE PHRASE)** ALL THE NATIONS’? But you have made it a ROBBERS’ 18 **(INFORMATION NOT IN MATTHEW'S PARALLEL ACCOUNT)** The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.

Luke 19:46-47+ saying to them, “It is written, ‘AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,’ but you have made it a ROBBERS’ DEN.” And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him,

Isaiah 56:7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a **house of prayer** for all the peoples.”

Jeremiah 7:11 “Has this house, which is called by My name, become a **den of robbers** in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” declares the LORD.



Painting by A N Mironov

And He \*said ([historical present tense](#)) to them, “It is written ([grapho](#)) ‘MY HOUSE ([oikos](#)) SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE ([oikos](#)) OF PRAYER ([proseuche](#)); but (term of contrast) you are making it a ROBBERS’ ([lestes](#)) DEN ([spelaiion](#)) - Jesus justifies His actions as righteous and in keeping with what the Scripture had prophesied centuries before! Jesus once again gives us the

excellent pattern of defending Himself with the living and active Word of God and, as His followers, we should seek to emulate His pattern! **Written** ([grapho](#)) is in the perfect tense signifying it was written in the past (Isa 56:7) and remains in effect. **But** marks a striking contrast between a holy house and an unholy den.

In Mark's version (and Isa 56:7 - [see note](#)) we read His house was to be for **all the nations**. **D A Carson** explains "The temple was not fulfilling its God-ordained role as witness to the nations but had become, like the first temple, the premier symbol of a superstitious belief that God would protect and rally his people irrespective of their conformity to his will."

**C H Spurgeon** - Our Lord, while he drives out the profaners of the temple, vindicates his holy violence by saying, **'It is written.'** Whether he was contending with the arch-enemy, or with wicked men, he used but one weapon, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." (Eph 6:17+) In this, as in everything else, let us follow His example. Isaiah had penned those words (Isaiah 56:7), **"Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."** This prophecy had a special relation to the [Court of the Gentiles](#), which was being so grossly desecrated by these dealers. Our Savior likened His Father's house, when occupied by these buyers and sellers, to those caves in the mountains where robbers were wont to lurk in his day: **"Ye have made it a den of thieves."** (Jeremiah 7:11) The words spoken by the King were strong, but not more so than the case before Him required. It is a king's business to break up the hiding-places of bandits, and Jesus did so. He could not bear to see His Father's house of prayer made into a haunt of robbers. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Mark Moore** - Three different times Jesus verbally accosted the temple before this "cleansing" (Lk 13:34–35; 19:42–44; Jn 2:19–20) and twice afterward (Mt 23:37–39 and Mk 13:1–37/Mt 24:1–5/Lk 21:5–36). These threats were later remembered with crystal clarity (Mk 14:58/Mt 26:61; Mk 15:29/Mt 27:40; Thom 71; Acts 6:14). (For a list of other historical figures who threatened the temple, see article [Opposition to the Temple by Charles Evans](#)) (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos](#) or [book format](#))

**NET NOTE** - A quotation from Jer 7:11. The meaning of Jesus' statement about making the temple courts a den of robbers probably operates here at two levels. Not only were the religious leaders robbing the people financially, but because of this they had also robbed them spiritually by stealing from them the opportunity to come to know God genuinely. It is possible that these merchants had recently been moved to this location for convenience.

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**HISTORICAL PRESENT** - Verbs in [present tense](#) in the context of the so-called [historical present](#) call for a vivid imagination on the part of the reader. The **historical present** describes a past event as though it were actually taking place. Here the present is a pictorial tense, displaying the action vividly before our eyes. In English we often use the historical present when recounting personal experiences such as "then he says to me" even though what he said occurred in the past. The Gospel of Mark frequently uses **historical present** - see [peculiarities of Mark](#). Mark wants us to picture these Pharisees surrounding Jesus like a "brood of vipers" with serpentine precision surrounding Jesus, as if preparing their "victim" for a kill!

**Matthew 21:14 And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.**

- Mt 9:35 Mt 11:4,5 Isa 35:5 Ac 3:1-9 10:38

#### **Related Passages:**

Matthew 9:35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Matthew 11:4-5 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5 the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

**And** - After He had cleaned house!

**The blind** ([tuphlos](#)) **and the lame** ([cholos](#)) **came to** ([proserchomai](#)) **Him in the temple** ([hieros](#)), **and He healed** ([therapeuo](#)) **them** - Both these groups of disabled people knew He had healed others. Note the contrast between evil men taking advantage of the people who came to the Temple and Jesus helping those who came to Him in the Temple.

**C H Spurgeon** - The coming into the temple of blind mendicants and limping beggars was no defilement to the holy place. The blind and the lame came to him: to whom else should they come? Was he not the good Physician? They come to him

in the temple: where else should they come? Was it not the house of mercy? Jesus, in his Father's name, welcomed the motley band, and healed them. Some people seem to think that, if the very poor come into places of worship, they are out of place; but this is the vain notion of a wicked pride. The poorest and the most sinful may come to Jesus. We, too, came into the assembly of the saints at one time, spiritually blind and lame; but Jesus opened our eyes, and healed us of our lameness. If he sees anything amiss with us now, we are sure he will not drive us away from his courts, but he will heal us at once. Let all the blind and lame come to him now. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became indignant**

- **when the chief priests and the scribes:** Mt 21:23 26:3,59 27:1,20 Isa 26:11 Mk 11:18 Lu 19:39,40 20:1 22:2,66 Joh 11:47-49,57 12:19
- **Hosanna to the Son of David:** Mt 21:9 22:42 Joh 7:42
- **they were:** Joh 4:1

#### Related Passages:

Acts 7:51+ "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

Jeremiah 4:4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Or else My wrath will go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds."

Jeremiah 6:10 To whom shall I speak and give warning **That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen.** Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.

Colossians 2:11+ And in Him (CHRIST) you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

## SEEING MIRACLES HEARING PRAISES

**But** - Term of contrast and what a striking contrast in this context -- the physically blind versus the spiritually blind, the former seeking healing, the latter eschewing healing from their "disease" of sin!

**When the chief priests** ([archiereus](#)) **and the scribes** ([grammateus](#) - experts in the law, teachers of religious law) **saw the wonderful** (thaumasios - remarkable, worthy of amazement) **things that He had done** ([poieo](#)) - Seeing is believing is an old adage, but sadly was not true of these religious bigots! These hypocrites were able to clearly see the miraculous powers of Jesus. They could not dispute blind receiving sight (which they probably knew was one of the signs that Messiah had arrived [cf Messianic Passage like Isaiah 35:4-6+, cf Jesus' words for John the Baptist in Mt 11:2-6+], but they simply did not care!) The healings were clearly for the people but, as a manifestation of the Lord's great compassion, they were also for these religious bigots. It was God showing them one more time Who Jesus really was so that they might come to their senses and believe in Him for eternal life!

**And the children** ([pais](#)) **who were shouting** ([krazo](#) - crying out - present tense - continually) **in the temple, "Hosanna** (Save us now!) **to the Son of David** - The **children** ([pais](#)) refers to young persons usually below age of puberty who were continually shouting out "Save us now" Messiah ( ~ [Son of David](#)) The religious leaders were forced to not only see God's power but here to hear God's praise. They knew what [Hosanna](#) meant and they knew that [Son of David](#) was clearly a Messianic title. And yet they failed to understand because they were "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" (Acts 7:51+). They were like those who heard Jesus parables for "while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." (Mt 13:13+).

**They became indignant** ([aganakteo](#) - aroused at what they assume to be wrong, angry) - KJV "sore displeased"!

**MacArthur** - instead of joining in the worship of the Messiah, the Temple leaders became **indignant**. The term behind indignant carries the idea of fury and wrath. To those men, Jesus' healing of the blind and lame, though incontestably amazing, was repugnant. The Pharisees had charged Jesus with casting out demons by the power of "Beelzebub the ruler of the demons" (Matt.



12:24). The chief priests and the scribes now perhaps thought the same thing about His healing. Not only did He oppose them as the rulers of the Temple, but in their eyes He actually worked against God by arbitrarily healing those they thought were being divinely punished for their sins. Like the Pharisees, the chief priests and the scribes felt so self-righteously superior to the common man, especially to the afflicted and poor who were thought to deserve their fate, that witnessing no amount of suffering could elicit compassion in them. And they were so adamant in their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah that no amount of evidence could elicit belief in them. Instead of recognizing their authority, Jesus condemned their self-righteousness. Instead of praising their holiness, He condemned their hypocrisy. Instead of acknowledging their religious works as pleasing to God, He condemned them as offensive to God and worthless. (See [The MacArthur Commentary](#))

**C H Spurgeon - Chief priests and scribes** are ever on the watch: nothing that glorifies the Lord Jesus will escape their eyes. Expect no less in these days: if the Gospel prevails, formalists will be enraged. Praise rendered to Jesus was gall and wormwood to the ecclesiastics whose abuses He rebuked. His doings in the temple, which were self-evidently right, they dared not attack; but they were none the less full of wrath because of the wonderful things that He did. More and more they nursed their indignation. At last the enthusiastic shouts of the children crying in the temple, and saying, "[Hosanna to the son of David](#)," gave them an occasion to vent their contempt. How could a real prophet allow boys and girls to be shouting, at his heels at that rate? ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" And Jesus \*said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'OUT OF THE MOUTH OF INFANTS AND NURSING BABIES YOU HAVE PREPARED PRAISE FOR YOURSELF'?"**

BGT Matthew 21:16 καὶ ἐπῶν αὐτὸ· κοίτις τοῖς λουσίαις; ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς· να· ὁ δὲ ποτε ὑγνώτε τι κ σμματος νηπιῶν καὶ θηλαζόντων κατηρτσωμένον;

NET Matthew 21:16 and said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of children and nursing infants you have prepared praise for yourself'?"

CSB Matthew 21:16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" "Yes," Jesus told them. "Have you never read: You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and nursing infants?"

ESV Matthew 21:16 and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, "'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?"

NIV Matthew 21:16 "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, " 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"

NLT Matthew 21:16 They asked Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" "Yes," Jesus replied. "Haven't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'You have taught children and infants to give you praise.' "

- **Hear:** Lu 19:39,40 Joh 11:47,48 Ac 4:16-18
- **have:** Mt 12:3 Mt 19:4 Mt 22:31 Mk 2:25
- **Out:** Mt 11:25 Ps 8:2

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 11:25+ At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

Psalm 8:2+ From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established **strength** (Lxx = *ainos* = praise) Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.

### PRAISE FULFILLED PROPHECY IN PSALM

**And** - This "**hinge word**" ([SEE VIDEO ON HINGE WORDS](#) - THIS IS GUARANTEED TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU READ YOUR BIBLE!) connects with their indignation in Mt 21:15. They cannot hold in their anger! So now out of their mouths came that which had filled their hearts (Mt 12:34+).

**Said to Him, "Do You hear ([akouo](#)) what these children are saying** (present tense - continually)?" - Of course Jesus heard and what He heard pleased Him. These children were like "small evangelists" calling out to the lost souls in the Temple. In effect, in the eyes of these religious bigots, these children were committing blasphemy in offering praise to Jesus! But instead of condemning them, Jesus willingly received their praises, for now He was no longer suppressing the truth that He was indeed their Messiah.

It is notable that this is the second time the religious leaders seek to hush the crowd from praising Jesus, for as He entered Jerusalem "the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "**Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.**" (Lk 19:37-39+)

**And Jesus \*said** ([historical present tense](#)) **to them**, "**Yes; have you never read** ([anaginosko](#)) - Of course they had. But they rejected the Spirit's work of opening the eyes of their understanding. Moore quips that Jesus' question is "like accusing a preacher of not knowing John 3:16"!

**OUT OF THE MOUTH** ([stoma](#)) **OF INFANTS** ([nepios](#)) **AND NURSING BABIES** (NJB - babes in arms) **YOU HAVE PREPARED** ([katartizo](#)) **PRAISE** (ainos - praise - what is spoken to extol and honor - only other use Lk 18:43+) **FOR YOURSELF'** (Ps 8:2) - **CSB**  
= "You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and nursing infants."

**THOUGHT** - As you ponder these words from the lips of our King Who was soon to be rejected by the very city in which He will one day reign as King of kings (Rev 19:16+), take a moment of respite from your study to play this beautiful but sad song [Yerushalayim](#). I dare you to keep from weeping as you watch and listen to the melody and words.

**Gotquestions** comments that "*Out of the mouth of babes You have perfected praise* means the praise of little children is perfect praise. It is perfect because children can comprehend the realities of God's kingdom that even the most learned fail to grasp (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13–15; Luke 18:16–17). Children are not blinded by pride and hypocrisy and are better able to perceive spiritual truth (Matthew 18:3–4.) Jesus accepts their worship because it is untainted and reserved for God alone."

*The children had understood what the leaders had not—  
that Jesus was their promised Savior.*  
-- Gotquestions.org

**THOUGHT** - Regarding **prepared** it is interesting that the sense of this verb ([katartizo](#)) conveys the fundamental idea of putting something into its appropriate condition so it will function well. By way of application might when do we who are made in the image of God function optimally? Could it be that it is when we are praising our Creator? That's somewhat rhetorical for you to ponder. You might test this thought out over the next few days by letting out of your mouth like a little child come exuberant praise for our great God. Let me know if any of you carries out this "experiment." A good "template" is Psalm 103:1-5

*Have ye not read your own Psalter,  
of which ye profess to be such diligent students?*

**C H Spurgeon** - Yet their contempt was only assumed: in truth they feared Jesus, and dreaded the effect of the popular enthusiasm, and so they were sore displeased. As soon as they can find an opportunity, they will spit their venom upon the Lord. They boldly speak to Jesus about this rabblement of juveniles. They said unto him, "**Hearest thou what these say? They salute Thee as if Thou wert a king. These silly children cry to thee, 'Hosanna.' Why dost thou allow them to say it? Bid the youngsters cease their boisterous noise. How canst thou as a man bear with such childish cries?**" Our Savior's answer was complete. In answer to their question, "**Hearest thou what these say?**" Jesus saith unto them, "**Yea; have ye never read?**" Ye chief priests and scribes, have ye not read your own Psalter, of which ye profess to be such diligent students? If ye have read it, remember the words of David in Psalm 8:2+, "**Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.**" Our Lord gives the sense of the passage rather than the exact words. God's praise is perfected out of children's mouths. In them His glory is seen, and frequently by them it is declared. When others are silent, these shall speak out, and in their simple truthfulness they shall give forth the praise of the Lord more fully than grown-up men and women will. (**ED**: OH, FOR THE SPIRIT TO MAKE US MORE AND MORE LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN, UNAFRAID AND UNASHAMED TO CRY OUT BEFORE OTHERS THE PRAISE THAT IS DUE HIS NAME. IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN) ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Prepared** (2675) [katartizo](#) from **katá** = with + **artizō** = to adjust, fit, finish, in turn from **ártios** = fit, complete) means to fit or join together and so to mend or repair. **Katartízō** conveys the fundamental idea of putting something into its appropriate condition so it will function well. It conveys the idea of making whole by fitting together, to order and arrange properly. When applied to that which is weak and defective, it denotes setting right what has gone wrong, to restore to a former condition, whether mending broken nets or setting broken bones.

**KATARTIZO** - 13V - complete(1), equip(1), fully trained(1), made complete(2), mending(2), perfect(1), prepared(4), restore(1). Matt. 4:21; Matt. 21:16; Mk. 1:19; Lk. 6:40; Rom. 9:22; 1 Co. 1:10; 2 Co. 13:11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 3:10; Heb. 10:5; Heb. 11:3; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:10

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**QUESTION - [What does it mean that “out of the mouth of babes You have perfected praise” \(Matthew 21:16\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In Matthew 21, Jesus has just arrived in Jerusalem for the final days leading up to His death on the cross. While He was in the temple, [healing the blind and the lame](#), the leading priests and scribes saw Jesus performing miracles and even heard children shouting, “Hosanna! Praise God for the Son of David.” The religious teachers grew irate, questioning Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?” “Yes,” Jesus responded to His critics, asking, “Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise’?” (Matthew 21:16, NKJV).

Jesus was quoting Psalm 8:2:

“Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants  
You have ordained strength,  
Because of Your enemies,  
That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.”

Following the Greek Septuagint, Matthew 21:16 uses “**praise**” instead of “**strength**.” The idea is that God silences His enemies and puts them to shame by the words coming out of the mouths of babies and infants who tell of the Lord’s strength.

Earlier this day, six days before the Passover, Jesus had [ridden on a donkey into the city](#). The crowds celebrated Him as the Messiah and guided Him into town like a conquering warrior or exalted king:

“A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’” (Matthew 21:8–9).

The Jewish leaders could not miss the implications as they observed everything taking place. They witnessed Christ’s victorious entry into Jerusalem, the ecstatic crowd of worshippers, His commanding cleansing of the temple, His miracles of healing, and even children proclaiming His praises. The people hailed Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and it was more than these religious hypocrites could handle. They became outraged.

By pointing out what they saw as a dreadful error—children worshipping Him as Messiah—they thought Jesus would be horrified that He had misled these innocent ones, even causing them to commit blasphemy. Surely Jesus would put a quick stop to it. But instead, Jesus saw nothing wrong with receiving their praise. He accepted it enthusiastically, supporting their actions by referring to an Old Testament Scripture that the religious leaders would recognize. The children had understood what the leaders had not—that Jesus was their promised Savior. The Jewish leaders were the same as God’s Old Testament enemies who would be silenced and put to shame by children’s praise.

The word **babes** refers to “infants” and “young children.” Earlier, in Matthew 11:25–27+, Jesus had affirmed the ability of children to perceive the secrets of God’s kingdom when others could not:

“O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!” (NLT).

The children crying out praises to God in the temple proved to be wiser than the wise (see 1 Corinthians 1:18–25+). Even though the priests and scribes failed to praise God, these little children would not. Luke’s gospel records the Pharisees trying to silence the crowds during Jesus’ triumphal entry. But Jesus declares,

“If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!” (Luke 19:40NLT+).

About Matthew 21:16 and Psalm 8:2, one Bible commentator writes, “The ‘scarcely articulate’ cry of an infant proves, like the heaven and the stars, the power and providence of God. On all these God builds a stronghold against His adversaries, i. e. convinces them of His might. So also the children in the temple attest the truth of God” ([Carr, A. \*The Gospel According to St Matthew, with Maps, Notes, and Introduction\*. Cambridge University Press, 1893, p. 162](#)).

*Out of the mouth of babes You have perfected praise* means the praise of little children is perfect praise. It is perfect because children can comprehend the realities of God’s kingdom that even the most learned fail to grasp (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13–15; Luke 18:16–17). Children are not blinded by pride and hypocrisy and are better able to perceive spiritual truth (Matthew 18:3–4.) Jesus accepts their worship because it is untainted and reserved for God alone.

**READ:** Matthew 21:1-17

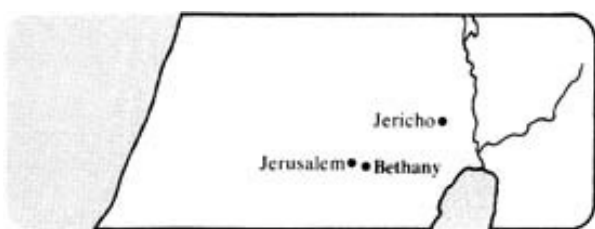
THE religious leaders were wrong about Jesus. They knew a lot about theology, but they knew nothing about Christ. The children, however, were right. They were the ones in the temple who shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" They believed that the person riding that unbroken colt was the promised Son of David. They fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 8:2 by giving praise to the Lamb who was about to die for the sins of the world. It was the children who responded with wholehearted joy, even though they couldn't fully understand Jesus' mission of human redemption. Children can teach us a vital lesson about faith. Their innocence makes it easy for them to believe and trust in the one who is truth, goodness, and love all in one.

Adults think they know so much. We try to be so mature, so correct, so religious. But I wonder if we would even recognize the Savior if He walked among us. Or would we, like those people long ago, be deceived because He doesn't fit our preconceived ideas of how He should behave and what His agenda should be?—D C Egnér (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**Lord, grant me the faith of children, who are able to believe so easily in Your goodness because they have seen so little of this world's evil. May I not be deceived by Satan's empty promises when he offers me something that looks good, but rather trust You, the author and possessor of all true goodness.**

**Matthew 21:17 And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.**

- **he left:** Mt 16:4 Jer 6:8 Ho 9:12 Mk 3:7 Lu 8:37,38
- **Bethany:** Mk 11:11,19 Lu 10:38 Joh 11:1,18 12:1-3



**HE LEFT THEM!  
WOE TO THEM!**

**And He left ([kataleipo](#)) them** - He **left** the religious antagonists after giving them a Scriptural rebuttal to their complaint of Him healing and receiving praises from children.

As **Mark Moore** says "Such hypocrisy deserves more than this minor rebuke. It will, however, have to wait until the next day. Jesus has already used up the bulk of the afternoon with the Triumphal Entry and this healing service. He merely scopes out the problem, returns to Bethany with his inner band of twelve, and sleeps on it. But the fireworks are coming on Monday!" (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos](#) or [book format](#))

**And went out ([exerchomai](#)) of the city to Bethany, and spent the night ([aulizomai](#)) there** - He was fully Human and here we see He rested probably at home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

Mark 11:11+ says "Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late (WHERE HE "spent the night")."

**C H Spurgeon** - Jesus loved not quibbling priests. He left them. He gave them a Scriptural answer to their enquiry, and then, knowing that further argument with them was useless, he left them. A wise example for us to follow. He desired quiet, and so he went out of the city. He loved the villages, and therefore he turned aside from the busy haunts of men, and entered into Bethany. In that place there lived a well-beloved family, always charmed to entertain him; and he lodged there. There he was at home, for he loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus. A day of excitement was followed by an evening of retirement in a country home. He spent the night of that most eventful day with his faithful friends. What a contrast between his entry into Jerusalem and his visit to his friends at Bethany! Lord, lodge with me! Make my house thine abode! ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:18 Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry.**

- **Now in the morning:** Mk 11:12-13
- **He became hungry:** Mt 4:2 12:1 Lu 4:2 Heb 4:15

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:12-14+ On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry. 13 Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

### JESUS RETURN TO CITY AFTER RESTING IN BETHANY

**Now in the morning** ([proi](#)) **when He was returning to** ([epanago](#)) **the city** - Having spent the night at Bethany (Mk 11:12) indicates that Jesus did not go for 24 hours round the clock in this last week, but that He rested, even during these crucial last hours of His life. They came early to get in a full day in the Holy City. Luke 21:38 adds that "all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him."

**He became hungry** ([peinao](#)) - In **He hungered** we see the humanity of Jesus.

**C H Spurgeon** - He hungered. Wonderful words! The Lord of heaven hungered! We cannot imagine that his kind hosts had neglected to provide for him; probably he was so absorbed in thought that he forgot to eat bread. It may be that, according to his wont, in the morning, he had risen while all others in the house were still sleeping, that he might hold communion in private with his Father, and receive from heaven strength for the work that lay before him. At least, this was no unusual thing with him. He returned into the city; he shirked not the work which he had yet to do; but this time the King came hungering to his capital. He was about to begin a long day's work without breaking his fast; yet his hand had fed thousands at one time. Surely all heaven and earth will be eager to wait upon his need. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Morning** ([4404](#))([proi](#) from **pro** = before) is an adverb of time closely paralleling our English word early or the phrase in the morning. Proi means early, in the (early) morning; in Jewish time reckoning, the last watch of the night.

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**Matthew Henry Concise - Mt 21:18-22** This cursing of the barren fig-tree represents the state of hypocrites in general, and so teaches us that Christ looks for the power of religion in those who profess it, and the savour of it from those that have the show of it. His just expectations from flourishing professors are often disappointed; he comes to many, seeking fruit, and finds leaves only. A false profession commonly withers in this world, and it is the effect of Christ's curse. The fig-tree that had no fruit, soon lost its leaves. This represents the state of the nation and people of the Jews in particular. Our Lord Jesus found among them nothing but leaves. And after they rejected Christ, blindness and hardness grew upon them, till they were undone, and their place and nation rooted up. The Lord was righteous in it. Let us greatly fear the doom denounced on the barren fig-tree.

### TIMING OF CURSING THE FIG TREE

The timing of the Cursing of the Fig Tree is somewhat difficult to understand. This event is described in (Mt 21:18–19; Mk 11:12–14).

**Mark Moore** has an excellent discussion and integration of these otherwise somewhat confusing passages. (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos](#) or [book format](#)) **Moore** writes...

At this point, **Matthew condenses his narrative**. This has two results. **First**, it looks as if the cleansing of the temple took place on Sunday afternoon, while Mark clarifies that it took place on Monday. **Second**, he makes it look like the cursing of the fig tree and the lessons drawn from it took place at the same time. Again, Mark clarifies that there was a twenty-four hour interval between the two. Mark's twenty-four hour interval is valuable not just for understanding the chronology, but also the theology of this passage. You see, Jesus curses the fig tree on Monday. The disciples don't notice it until Tuesday. Between these two events, Jesus cleanses the temple. Thus we understand that the withered fig tree is a symbol of Israel's future. It is kind of like an enacted parable.

Early on Monday morning Jesus hikes two miles back to Jerusalem for some unfinished business in the temple. Jesus shouldn't have been hungry yet. Jews normally only ate two meals a day: 10 a.m. and 6–7 p.m. It was still too early for "breakfast." Perhaps in all the excitement of the previous day Jesus missed his supper. That would not be the first time Jesus missed a meal because of



business (Mk 3:20; 6:31).

Up ahead, off to the side of the road, Jesus notices a fig tree in full leaf. Passover time was unusually early for fig trees to leaf out. But normally, with the leaves came the green buds which would mature into figs. They are bitter but edible. Jesus goes to the tree looking for the fruit that its leaves promise. He finds nothing but leaves.

Jesus has been criticized for expecting figs before their time. After all, "It was not the season for figs." That criticism misses the point. The leaves promise there will be green fruit. But there isn't. What's worse, without the green fruit now, there will be no figs later.

Jesus has also been severely criticized for using his divine power to destroy an inanimate object in a fit of anger.<sup>14</sup> This too misses the point. Jesus isn't wreaking vengeance on a deceitful tree. He is using this opportunity to teach his disciples a valuable lesson, especially in light of what he is about to do in the temple.

To Jesus people are more valuable than things. He places more value on teaching his disciples than on an inanimate object. This same lesson was to be learned at the loss of 2,000 pigs in Gerasa. Besides, this tree is unproductive. It is taking up space on God's good earth without doing its job. It is absurd to picture nature weeping the loss of its valued comrade through the whimsical anger of Jesus. It is a useless tree.

It has the appearance of a fruit-bearing tree, but it is not. So Jesus curses this unproductive tree as he is about to curse an unproductive temple which doesn't bear appropriate fruit. There is no way they could have predicted from his words—"May no one ever eat fruit from you again"—how immediate and severe the demise of this poor tree will be. Matthew says that it withers immediately. Within twenty-four hours, when they pass this spot again, they will notice that it has withered from its roots (Mk 11:20). Now that is "immediate" in any arborist's book! (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos](#) or [book format](#))

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## SUMMARY OF THE MATTHEW'S COMPRESSED AND MARK'S EXPANDED ACCOUNTS OF CURSING THE FIG TREE

### Matthew 21:18–22 (Condensed Account)

Jesus curses the fig tree in the morning (MONDAY MORNING).

- The tree withers immediately. (BUT THE DISCIPLES DO NOT NOTICE UNTIL TUESDAY MORNING - Mk 10:20-21)
- The disciples are amazed then and there.
- Jesus teaches on faith and prayer as a result.

In summary, in Matthew's account the Cursing of the Fig Tree appears immediate so that Matthew describes the cursing and withering as if they are one event.

### Mark 11:12–14, 20–21 (Expanded Account)

#### Day 1 (Monday):

- Jesus curses the fig tree (Mark 11:12–14, cf Mt 21:18-19a).
- No mention of withering at that moment.

#### Day 2 (Tuesday):

- They pass by again and see the fig tree withered from the roots (Mark 11:20–21).
- Peter calls Jesus' attention to it.

In summary in Mark's expanded account, the Cursing of the Fig Tree appears progressive so that Jesus curses the tree on Monday and it withers, but the withering is not noticed by the disciples until the next day, Tuesday.

Here are the accounts from Mark and Matthew integrated...

Mark 10:12-14NIV The next day {early in the morning Mt 21:18NIV} as they were leaving Bethany {on his way back to the city, Mt 21:18NIV} Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance {by the road Mt 21:19NIV} 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. {Immediately the tree withered. Mt 21:19NIV}

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**Why Was the Fig Tree Cursed? - This incident is related by Mark and, in a more compressed form, by Matthew.** According to Mark, Jesus and his disciples spent the night following his entry into Jerusalem in Bethany. Next morning they returned to Jerusalem. On the way he felt hungry, and “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.” Then Jesus cursed the tree: “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” They continued on their way into Jerusalem, where that day he cleansed the temple; in the evening they returned to Bethany. Next morning, as they passed the same place, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!” (Mk 11:20–21).

Was it not unreasonable to curse the tree for being fruitless when, as Mark expressly says, “it was not the season for figs”? The problem is most satisfactorily cleared up in a discussion called “The Barren Fig Tree” published many years ago by W. M. Christie, a Church of Scotland minister in Palestine under the British mandatory regime. He pointed out first the time of year at which the incident is said to have occurred (if, as is probable, Jesus was crucified on April 6th, A.D. 30, the incident occurred during the first days of April). “Now,” wrote Christie, “the facts connected with the fig tree are these. Toward the end of March the leaves begin to appear, and in about a week the foliage coating is complete. Coincident with [this], and sometimes even before, there appears quite a crop of small knobs, not the real figs, but a kind of early forerunner. They grow to the size of green almonds, in which condition they are eaten by peasants and others when hungry. When they come to their own indefinite maturity they drop off.” These precursors of the true fig are called *taqsh* in Palestinian Arabic. Their appearance is a harbinger of the fully formed appearance of the true fig some six weeks later. So, as Mark says, the time for figs had not yet come. But if the leaves appear without any *taqsh*, that is a sign that there will be no figs. Since Jesus found “nothing but leaves”—leaves without any *taqsh*—he knew that “it was an absolutely hopeless, fruitless fig tree” and said as much.

But if that is the true explanation of his words, why should anyone trouble to record the incident as though it had some special significance? Because it did have some special significance. As recorded by Mark, it is an acted parable with the same lesson as the spoken parable of the fruitless fig tree in Luke 13:6–9. In that spoken parable a landowner came three years in succession expecting fruit from a fig tree on his property, and when year by year it proved to be fruitless, he told the man in charge of his vineyard to cut it down because it was using up the ground to no good purpose. In both the acted parable and the spoken parable it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the fig tree represents the city of Jerusalem, unresponsive to Jesus as he came to it with the message of God, and thereby incurring destruction. Elsewhere Luke records how Jesus wept over the city’s blindness to its true well-being and foretold its ruin “because you did not know the time of your visitation” (Lk 19:41–44 RSV). It is because the incident of the cursing of the fig tree was seen to convey the same lesson that Mark, followed by Matthew, recorded it. (Walter Kaiser, et al - See page 405 of [Hard Sayings of the Bible](#))

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**QUESTION - [Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The account of Jesus cursing the barren fig tree is found in two different gospel accounts. First, it is seen in Matthew 21:18-22, and then also in Mark 11:12-14. While there are slight differences between the two accounts, they are easily reconciled by studying the passages. Like all Scripture, the key to understanding this passage comes from understanding the context in which it happened. In order to properly understand this passage, we must first look at the chronological and geographical setting. For example, when did this occur, what was the setting, and where did it happen? Also, in order to fully understand this passage, we need to have an understanding of the importance of the fig tree as it relates to the nation of Israel and understand how the fig tree is often used in the Scriptures to symbolically represent Israel. Finally, we must have a basic understanding of the fig tree itself, its growing seasons, etc.

First, in looking at the general chronological setting of the passage, we see that it happened during the week before His crucifixion. Jesus had entered Jerusalem a day earlier amid the praise and worship of the Jewish people who were looking to Him as the King/Messiah who was going to deliver them from Roman occupation (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11). Now, the next day, Jesus is again on His way to Jerusalem from where He was staying in Bethany. On His way, both Matthew and Mark record that He was hungry and saw a fig tree in the distance that had leaves on it (Mark 11:13). Upon coming to the tree expecting to find something to eat, Jesus instead discovered that the fig tree had no fruit on it and cursed the tree saying, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” (Matthew 21:19; Mark 11:14). Matthew records the cursing and the withering of the fig tree all in one account and includes it after the account of Jesus cleansing the Temple of the moneychangers. Mark explains that it actually took place over two days, with Jesus cursing the fig tree the first day on the way to cleanse the Temple, and the disciples seeing the tree withered on the second day when they were again going to Jerusalem from Bethany (Mark 11:12-14 and Mark 11:19-20). Of course, upon seeing the tree “withered from the roots up,” the disciples were amazed, as that would have normally taken several weeks.

Having reviewed the general chronological setting of the story, we can begin to answer some of many questions that are often asked of it. First of all is the question, Why did Jesus curse the fig tree if it was not the right season for figs? The answer to this question can be determined by studying the characteristics of fig trees. The fruit of the fig tree generally appears before the leaves, and,

because the fruit is green it blends in with the leaves right up until it is almost ripe. Therefore, when Jesus and His disciples saw from a distance that the tree had leaves, they would have expected it to also have fruit on it even though it was earlier in the season than what would be normal for a fig tree to be bearing fruit. Also, each tree would often produce two to three crops of figs each season. There would be an early crop in the spring followed by one or two later crops. In some parts of Israel, depending on climate and conditions, it was also possible that a tree might produce fruit ten out of twelve months. This also explains why Jesus and His disciples would be looking for fruit on the fig tree even if it was not in the main growing season. The fact that the tree already had leaves on it even though it was at a higher elevation around Jerusalem, and therefore would have been outside the normal season for figs, would have seemed to be a good indication that there would also be fruit on it.

As to the significance of this passage and what it means, the answer to that is again found in the chronological setting and in understanding how a fig tree is often used symbolically to represent Israel in the Scriptures. First of all, chronologically, Jesus had just arrived at Jerusalem amid great fanfare and great expectations, but then proceeds to cleanse the Temple and curse the barren fig tree. Both had significance as to the spiritual condition of Israel. With His cleansing of the Temple and His criticism of the worship that was going on there (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17), Jesus was effectively denouncing Israel's worship of God. With the cursing of the fig tree, He was symbolically denouncing Israel as a nation and, in a sense, even denouncing unfruitful "Christians" (that is, people who profess to be Christian but have no evidence of a relationship with Christ).

The presence of a fruitful fig tree was considered to be a symbol of blessing and prosperity for the nation of Israel. Likewise, the absence or death of a fig tree would symbolize judgment and rejection. Symbolically, the fig tree represented the spiritual deadness of Israel, who while very religious outwardly with all the sacrifices and ceremonies, were spiritually barren because of their sins. By cleansing the Temple and cursing the fig tree, causing it to wither and die, Jesus was pronouncing His coming judgment of Israel and demonstrating His power to carry it out. It also teaches the principle that religious profession and observance are not enough to guarantee salvation, unless there is the fruit of genuine salvation evidenced in the life of the person. James would later echo this truth when he wrote that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). The lesson of the fig tree is that we should bear spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-23), not just give an appearance of religiosity. God judges fruitlessness, and expects that those who have a relationship with Him will "bear much fruit" (John 15:5-8).

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#### Related Resources:

- [What is the fig tree prophecy?](#)
- [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Fig Tree?](#)

**Matthew 21:19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He \*said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered.**

- **and found:** Isa 5:4,5 Lu 3:9 13:6-9 Joh 15:2,6 2Ti 3:5 Tit 1:16
- **Let:** Mk 11:14 Lu 19:42-44 Heb 6:7,8 2Pe 2:20-22 Rev 22:11
- **the fig tree:** Jude 1:12
- See M. Moulton ["Jesus' Goal for Temple and Tree: A Thematic Revisit of Matt 21:12-22," JETS 41/4 \(1998\)](#)

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:12-14+ On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry. 13 Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

Mark 11:21+ Being reminded, Peter \*said to Him, "Rabbi, look, **the fig tree which You cursed** has withered."

Luke 13:6-9+ And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. 7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' 8 "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; 9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'"

## THE FRUITLESS FIG TREE

Seeing a lone ([heis](#)) fig tree ([suke](#)) by the road ([hodos](#)), He came to ([erchomai](#)) it and found ([heurisko](#)) nothing on it except leaves only - Normally fig trees actually produced fruit before they sprouted leaves, so there should have been fruit on this leafy tree. Since it was probably April, it was unusual for a fig tree to even have leaves and as Mark 11:13+ says "it was not the season for figs."

And He \*said ([historical present tense](#)) to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit ([karpos](#)) from you." - No longer implies it did once have fruit but from now on it will be fruitless. Essentially Jesus "curses" the fig tree (cf Mk 11:21+) and the reason He does is because there is no fruit. It is a useless fig tree.

And at once ([parachrema](#)) the fig tree withered ([xeraino](#)) - Jesus' miracles were almost always immediate and this one is no exception. The withering was not apparent to the disciples until the next day (Mk 11:20+).

Some like **Bertrand Russell** took offense at this act and in his book *Why I Am Not a Christian* accused Jesus of "vindictive fury" (THINK ABOUT THE UTTER FOOLISHNESS FROM THIS "WISE" MAN! THIS IS THE CREATOR'S TREE TO DO WITH IT AS HE WILLS!) and wrote of our Lord's character "*I cannot myself feel that either in the matter of wisdom or in the matter of virtue Christ stands quite as high as some other people known to history.*" What a foolish, unhinged statement! I think Russell might have an entirely different opinion now that he is in Hades awaiting his final dispensation to the eternal Lake of fire!

**John MacArthur** feels "The fig tree represented spiritually dead Israel, its leaves represented Israel's outward religiousness, and its lack of fruit represented Israel's spiritual barrenness." (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 278](#))

**Mark Moore** - The unstated lesson of Jesus here is about the position of the faithless religious leaders. Based on the structure of Mark's narrative, we conclude that this fig tree is a symbol of the Jewish leaders (cf. Jer 8:13; Hos 9:10; Mic 7:1-6; Nah 3:12). Their appearance was deceitful. Outwardly they looked like productive trees—they did all the right things. But upon closer inspection, they had no real fruit. As Jesus literally predicted the demise of Jerusalem on Sunday afternoon (Lk 19:41-44), he does so here symbolically with the fig tree. (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos or book format](#))

Some like **D A Carson** disagree and say "This does not mean the common interpretation—that the fig tree represents Israel, cursed for not bearing fruit—is correct. In light of the discussion on the relation between leaves and fruit, Jesus is cursing those who make a show of bearing much fruit but are spiritually barren.....The cursing of the fig tree is an acted parable cursing hypocrites, not Jews or Judaism. (See Carson's reasoning [Matthew](#)).

[Gotquestions.org](#) adds "With His cleansing of the Temple and His criticism of the worship that was going on there (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17), Jesus was effectively denouncing Israel's worship of God. With the cursing of the fig tree, He was symbolically denouncing Israel as a nation and, in a sense, even denouncing unfruitful "Christians" (that is, people who profess to be Christian but have no evidence of a relationship with Christ). The presence of a fruitful fig tree was considered to be a symbol of blessing and prosperity for the nation of Israel. Likewise, the absence or death of a fig tree would symbolize judgment and rejection. Symbolically, the fig tree represented the spiritual deadness of Israel, who while very religious outwardly with all the sacrifices and ceremonies, were spiritually barren because of their sins. By cleansing the Temple and cursing the fig tree, causing it to wither and die, Jesus was pronouncing His coming judgment of Israel and demonstrating His power to carry it out. "

**THOUGHT** - Let's apply this fig tree story to modern Christianity. Leaves without fruit gives us a picture of (I fear) multitudes in the church today who have "green leaves" having made a profession of Christ, but they lack any evidence of fruit in their life. They are in danger of dying as a counterfeit Christian who will be forever cursed by Jesus at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15+). Dear reader can I ask you -- what is the evidence in your life that you are a genuine "fig tree" Christian? ?As I share the Gospel, I encounter so many people in America who **know about** Jesus and think that knowing about Him equates with personally knowing Him, but that latter knowledge is received only by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+). Sadly, such individuals are in danger of hearing those fateful words "I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS." (Mt 7:23+) I plead with you to examine your life for fruit and if you fail to find any to "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31+).

**ILLUSTRATION** - Jesse James killed a fellow in a bank robbery and shortly thereafter was baptized in the Kearney Baptist Church. Then he killed another man, a bank cashier, and joined the church choir and

taught hymn-singing. He liked Sundays, Jesse did, but he couldn't always show up at church...on 2 Sundays, he robbed trains. Do we as church members flee to church on Sundays in an attempt to cover up our sins? Do we "go to church" in order to maintain our reputation, or to worship & glorify God? If Jesus showed up today in our church what changes would he make? If Jesus showed up today in our personal temple (body) what changes would he make? Better yet, since He sees all anyway, what garbage do I need to toss out of "my temple" that I might be wholly holy and pleasing to my Father?

**NET NOTE** - The fig tree is a variation on the picture of a vine as representing the nation; see Isa 5:1–7.

**Danny Akin** has an insightful comment - The fig tree event brackets, serves as bookends to, the temple story and interprets it for us. It clearly reveals that Jesus did not just cleanse the temple. He cursed it. It had failed in the divine assignment given to it by God and it would be destroyed. With no fruit found, its use was at an end. God would remove it and do so in a dramatic fashion in less than a generation when the Romans invaded under the general Titus (A.D. 70) and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple....Sympathy for a soul-less tree in our day is badly misplaced and says much about our sloppy sentimental culture and its tragic perversion of real values. God had told Jonah to weep over lost people not a plant! Jesus says weep over a dead temple not a dead tree.

*The Lord Jesus used this green, but barren,  
and disappointing, tree as an object-lesson*

**C H Spurgeon** - Looking for food, a fig tree in full leaf promised him a little refreshment. This fig tree was, apparently, no one's property; it stood in the way, it was growing in the public highway, all by itself. Its position was conspicuous. and its appearance striking, so that he saw it at once. It was not the time for figs; but the fig tree has this peculiarity, that the fruit comes before the leaves; if, therefore, we see leaves fully developed, we naturally look for figs fit to be eaten. This tree had put forth leaves out of season, when other fig trees were bare, and had not begun to put forth their early figs. It, so to speak, outran its fellows; but its premature growth was all deception. Our Lord, when he came to it, found nothing thereon, but leaves only. It had overleaped the needful first stage of putting forth green figs, and had rushed into a fruitless verdure. It was great at wood and leaf, but worthless for fruit. In this it sadly resembled Jerusalem, which was verdant with religious pretense, and forward with a vain enthusiasm; but it was destitute of repentance, faith, and holiness, which are far more important than pious formalities. The Lord Jesus used this green, but barren, and disappointing, tree as an object-lesson. He came to it as he came to the Jews; he found nothing but **leaves**; he condemned it to perpetual fruitlessness: **"Let so fruit grow on thee henceforward forever;"** and he left it under a sentence which was right speedily executed, even as Jerusalem would soon be destroyed (70 AD). And presently the fig tree withered away. This has been styled the one miracle of judgment wrought by our Lord; but surely that which is done to a tree cannot be called vindictive. To fell a whole forest has never been considered cruel, and to use a single barren tree as an object-lesson, can only seem unkind to those who are sentimental and idiotic. It was kindness to the ages to use a worthless tree to teach a salutary lessons. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**J C Ryle** applies the story of the withered fig tree to salvation, true and false - Let us take care that we each individually learn the lesson that this fig tree conveys. Let us always remember, that baptism, and church-membership, and reception of the Lord's Supper, and a diligent use of the outward forms of Christianity, are not sufficient to save our souls. They are leaves, nothing but leaves, and without fruit will add to our condemnation. Like the fig leaves of which Adam and Eve made themselves garments, they will not hide the nakedness of our souls from the eye of an all-seeing God, or give us boldness when we stand before Him at the last day. No! we must bear fruit, or be lost forever. There must be fruit in our hearts and fruit in our lives, the fruit of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and true holiness in our conversation. Without such fruits as these a profession of Christianity will only sink us lower into hell.

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## HOW TO HARMONIZE THE MATTHEW AND MARK ACCOUNTS OF THE WITHERED FIG TREE

**Gotquestions.org** helps us with the timing of the parallel passages in Matthew 21:18-22, and Mark 11:12-14, 21- Matthew records the cursing and the withering of the fig tree all in one account and includes it after the account of Jesus cleansing the Temple of the moneychangers. Mark explains that it actually took place over two days, with Jesus cursing the fig tree the first day on the way to cleanse the Temple, and the disciples seeing the tree withered on the second day when they were again going to Jerusalem from Bethany (Mark 11:12-14 and Mark 11:19-21). Of course, upon seeing the tree "withered from the roots up," the disciples were amazed, as that would have normally taken several weeks.

### Matthew 21:18–22 GOING BACK TO JERUSALEM

- Jesus curses the fig tree **in the morning**.
- The tree **withers immediately**.



- The disciples are amazed **then and there**.
- Jesus teaches on **faith and prayer** as a result.

**Appears immediate** — the cursing and withering are in one event.

#### Mark 11:12–14, 20–21 (Expanded Account)

- **Day 1 (Monday):**
  - Jesus curses the fig tree (Mark 11:12–14).
  - No mention of withering at that moment.
- **Day 2 (Tuesday):**
  - They pass by again and **see the fig tree withered from the roots** (Mark 11:20–21).
  - Peter calls Jesus' attention to it.

**Appears progressive** — Jesus curses the tree, but the withering is **noticed the next day**.

**Walter Kaiser** - This incident is related by Mark and, in a more compressed form, by Matthew. According to Mark, Jesus and his disciples spent the night following his entry into Jerusalem in Bethany. Next morning they returned to Jerusalem. On the way he felt hungry, and "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." Then Jesus cursed the tree: "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." They continued on their way into Jerusalem, where that day he cleansed the temple; in the evening they returned to Bethany. Next morning, as they passed the same place, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!" (Mk 11:20–21).

**Matthew 21:20** Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?"

- **How:** Isa 40:6-8 Mk 11:20,21 Jas 1:10,11

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:12-14+ On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry. 13 Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

**Seeing this, the disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **were amazed** ([thaumazo](#)) **and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?"** - Normally it would take many days for a tree to wither. They are **amazed** but as readers we are amazed that they are **amazed**. Jesus had spoken and apparently immediately it withered. One would have thought the 12 would have tied together cause and effect by now! After they had seen Jesus rebuke the wind with just the words "Hush, be still" and the result was instant perfect calm (Mark 4:39+). But for some reason they don't seem to be able to "[connect the dots](#)" of His word and the withering.

**C H Spurgeon** has a similar comment that "The Lord's word was so very quickly fulfilled, that the disciples wondered. We marvel that they marveled. By this time they should have grown accustomed to deeds of power, and to the rapidity with which they were performed. Even to this day some doubt a work if it is speedy, and thus imitate the cry, "How soon is the fig tree withered away!" Whatever the Lord does, he does perfectly, completely. The fig tree was "presently" destroyed. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**QUESTION** - [Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - The account of Jesus cursing the barren fig tree is found in two different gospel accounts. First, it is seen in Matthew 21:18-22, and then also in Mark 11:12-14. While there are slight differences between the two accounts, they are easily reconciled by studying the passages. Like all Scripture, the key to understanding this passage comes from understanding the context in which it happened. In order to properly understand this passage, we must first look at the chronological and geographical setting. For

example, when did this occur, what was the setting, and where did it happen? Also, in order to fully understand this passage, we need to have an understanding of the importance of the fig tree as it relates to the nation of Israel and understand how the fig tree is often used in the Scriptures to symbolically represent Israel. Finally, we must have a basic understanding of the fig tree itself, its growing seasons, etc.

First, in looking at the general chronological setting of the passage, we see that it happened during the week before His crucifixion. Jesus had entered Jerusalem a day earlier amid the praise and worship of the Jewish people who were looking to Him as the King/Messiah who was going to deliver them from Roman occupation (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11). Now, the next day, Jesus is again on His way to Jerusalem from where He was staying in Bethany. On His way, both Matthew and Mark record that He was hungry and saw a fig tree in the distance that had leaves on it (Mark 11:13). Upon coming to the tree expecting to find something to eat, Jesus instead discovered that the fig tree had no fruit on it and cursed the tree saying, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" (Matthew 21:19; Mark 11:14). Matthew records the cursing and the withering of the fig tree all in one account and includes it after the account of Jesus cleansing the Temple of the moneychangers. Mark explains that it actually took place over two days, with Jesus cursing the fig tree the first day on the way to cleanse the Temple, and the disciples seeing the tree withered on the second day when they were again going to Jerusalem from Bethany (Mark 11:12-14 and Mark 11:19-20). Of course, upon seeing the tree "withered from the roots up," the disciples were amazed, as that would have normally taken several weeks.

Having reviewed the general chronological setting of the story, we can begin to answer some of many questions that are often asked of it. First of all is the question, Why did Jesus curse the fig tree if it was not the right season for figs? The answer to this question can be determined by studying the characteristics of fig trees. The fruit of the fig tree generally appears before the leaves, and, because the fruit is green it blends in with the leaves right up until it is almost ripe. Therefore, when Jesus and His disciples saw from a distance that the tree had leaves, they would have expected it to also have fruit on it even though it was earlier in the season than what would be normal for a fig tree to be bearing fruit. Also, each tree would often produce two to three crops of figs each season. There would be an early crop in the spring followed by one or two later crops. In some parts of Israel, depending on climate and conditions, it was also possible that a tree might produce fruit ten out of twelve months. This also explains why Jesus and His disciples would be looking for fruit on the fig tree even if it was not in the main growing season. The fact that the tree already had leaves on it even though it was at a higher elevation around Jerusalem, and therefore would have been outside the normal season for figs, would have seemed to be a good indication that there would also be fruit on it.

As to the significance of this passage and what it means, the answer to that is again found in the chronological setting and in understanding how a fig tree is often used symbolically to represent Israel in the Scriptures. First of all, chronologically, Jesus had just arrived at Jerusalem amid great fanfare and great expectations, but then proceeds to cleanse the Temple and curse the barren fig tree. Both had significance as to the spiritual condition of Israel. With His cleansing of the Temple and His criticism of the worship that was going on there (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17), Jesus was effectively denouncing Israel's worship of God. With the cursing of the fig tree, He was symbolically denouncing Israel as a nation and, in a sense, even denouncing unfruitful "Christians" (that is, people who profess to be Christian but have no evidence of a relationship with Christ).

The presence of a fruitful fig tree was considered to be a symbol of blessing and prosperity for the nation of Israel. Likewise, the absence or death of a fig tree would symbolize judgment and rejection. Symbolically, the fig tree represented the spiritual deadness of Israel, who while very religious outwardly with all the sacrifices and ceremonies, were spiritually barren because of their sins. By cleansing the Temple and cursing the fig tree, causing it to wither and die, Jesus was pronouncing His coming judgment of Israel and demonstrating His power to carry it out. It also teaches the principle that religious profession and observance are not enough to guarantee salvation, unless there is the fruit of genuine salvation evidenced in the life of the person. James would later echo this truth when he wrote that "faith without works is dead" ([James 2:26](#)). The lesson of the fig tree is that we should bear spiritual fruit ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)), not just give an appearance of religiosity. God judges fruitlessness, and expects that those who have a relationship with Him will "bear much fruit" ([John 15:5-8](#)).

**Matthew 21:21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen.**

KJV Matthew 21:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

BGT Matthew 21:21 ποκριθε ς ὃ ἡσο ς ε πεν α το ς· μ ν λ γω μ ν, ν χητε π σιν κα μ διακριθ τε, ο μ νον τ τ ς συκ ς ποι σετε, λλ κ ν τ ρει το τ ε πητε· ρητι κα βλ θητι ε ς τ ν θ λασσαν, γεν εται·

NET Matthew 21:21 Jesus answered them, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.

CSB Matthew 21:21 Jesus answered them, " I assure you: If you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done.

ESV Matthew 21:21 And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.

NIV Matthew 21:21 Jesus replied, "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.

NLT Matthew 21:21 Then Jesus told them, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen.

- **if you have faith:** Mt 17:20 Mk 11:22-23 Lu 17:6,7 Ro 4:19,20 1Co 13:2 Jas 1:6
- **Be taken up:** Mt 8:12

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:22-23+ And Jesus \*answered ([historical present](#)) saying to them, "Have faith in God. "Truly ([amen](#)) I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.

### AN IF/THEN PROMISE

**And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly ([amen](#)) I say to you,** This "[amen](#)" formula indicates an important truth spoken with authority (an "amen!" so to speak). **Amen** "gives self-authenticating authority to the words of Jesus." (Akin)

**TRULY I SAY - 76V** - Matt. 5:18; Matt. 5:26; Matt. 6:2; Matt. 6:5; Matt. 6:16; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 10:15; Matt. 10:23; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 11:11; Matt. 13:17; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 17:20; Matt. 18:3; Matt. 18:13; Matt. 18:18; Matt. 19:23; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 21:21; Matt. 21:31; Matt. 23:36; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 24:34; Matt. 24:47; Matt. 25:12; Matt. 25:40; Matt. 25:45; Matt. 26:13; Matt. 26:21; Matt. 26:34; Mk. 3:28; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 10:15; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 11:23; Mk. 12:43; Mk. 13:30; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 14:18; Mk. 14:25; Mk. 14:30; Lk. 4:24; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 12:44; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 21:3; Lk. 21:32; Lk. 23:43; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 3:5; Jn. 3:11; Jn. 5:19; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:51; Jn. 8:58; Jn. 10:1; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 13:20; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 13:38; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 16:23; Jn. 21:18

**If you have** (present tense subjunctive mood - mood of possibility) **faith** ([pistis](#)) **and do not doubt** ([diakrino](#)), **you will not only do what was done to the fig tree** ([suke](#)), **but even if you say to this mountain** ([\(3735\)](#)([oros](#)), **'Be taken up** ([airo](#) - [aorist imperative](#)) **and cast** ([ballo](#) - [aorist imperative](#)) **into the sea,' it will happen**- The parallel passage in Mark adds "believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him." (Mk 11:23+) Clearly Jesus is speaking figuratively and is teaching His disciples of the supernatural power that was available to them through faith in Him.

**If you say to this mountain** - Jesus is using [hyperbole](#) to make His point, mountain metaphor "representing what appears to be impossible, immovable, something beyond our finite ability! Good! This is where faith begins. Believing faith taps into God's power to accomplish His purpose. Again hear Andrew Murray who said, —We have a God who delights in impossibilities." ([Akin](#))

**Hiebert** reiterates the qualifying statement regarding "mountain moving" praying writing that "Jesus set no limits to the possibilities of prayer, but such successful praying must have a true foundation. The one praying can only have such confidence if he is sure that what he is asking is **in harmony with the will of God** and **further His purpose**. Such confidence is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit through the Word."

**C H Spurgeon** - To the first disciples the power of absolutely working miracles was given by our Lord, and given in connection with a simple, unwavering confidence: "If ye have faith, and doubt not. " God may not work miracles for us, but he will do all that we need

in accordance with our faith; doing it in a way of providence, according to the spirit of the present dispensation.

But here also the faith that we exercise in him must be free from doubt.

Before a living faith, barren systems of religion will wither away; and by the power of undoubting confidence in God, mountains of difficulty shall be removed, and cast into the sea. Have we ever spoken in Christ's name to barren fig trees and obstructing mountains, bidding them depart out of our way? If not, where is our faith? If we have faith and doubt not, we shall know the truth of this promise: it shall be done. Apart from the actual possession of unwavering faith, the words of our Lord will seem fabulous. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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I love Spurgeon's prayer for this genre of praying. Indeed, may the prayer of the Prince of Preachers also be our frequent prayer so that our praying will avail much for the King and Kingdom...

**Lord, teach us to pray. Put the thoughts into our minds, the desires into our hearts, and the very words into our lips, if it be Your will, that so all through it we may be praying in the Spirit and not in the flesh.**

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#### **Related Resource:**

- In depth discussion on Praying in the Spirit

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**Spurgeon** - If you look at it carefully, I think you will perceive the essential qualities which are necessary to any great success and prevalence in prayer. According to our Saviour's description of prayer, there should always be some definite objects for which we should plead. He speaks of things—"what things soever ye desire." It seems then that he did not put it that God's children would go to him to pray when they have nothing to pray for. Another essential qualification of prayer is earnest desire; for the Master supposes here that when we pray we have desires. Indeed it is not prayer, it may be something like prayer, the outward form or the bare skeleton, but it is not the living thing, the all-prevailing, almighty thing, called prayer, unless there be a fulness and overflowing of desires. Observe, too, that faith is an essential quality of successful prayer—"believe that ye receive them." Ye cannot pray so as to be heard in heaven and answered to your soul's satisfaction, unless you believe that God really hears and will answer you. One other qualification appears here upon the very surface, namely, that a realizing expectation should always go with a firm faith—"believe that ye receive them." Not merely believe that "ye shall" but believe that "ye do" receive them—count them as if they were received, reckon them as if you had them already, and act as if you had them—act as if you were sure you should have them—"believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." **Let us review these four qualities, one by one.** (For Spurgeon's review of these qualities read the sermon that you might be enabled and encouraged to pray with power and persistence [The True Prayer--True Power!](#))

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**Matthew 11:23 - Got Any Mountains?** Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Mark 11:23. Can we confidently claim and expect the conversion of our loved ones? Well, it must be in God's will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (Jn. 5:14). Does He will the conversion of every one? "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pt. 3:9). Then He will remove this mountain, but we must expect the mountain to move. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mt. 21:22). And the verse following our text says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." We pray hoping, but hoping is not faith. Faith takes God's word for the deed and in its geography lists the mountain as "disappeared." Got any mountains you think are unsinkable? (Vance Havner)

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**Wuest** says "'Faith is the title deed of things hoped for (Heb. 11:1+)." Just as a title deed guarantees to the one whose name appears on it, the ownership of the property, even though he may not have it in his actual possession, so faith is the title deed that guarantees to the one exercising it, the answer to his prayer, even though that answer may be delayed, and the thing asked for is not in his possession. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

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**MARK 11:23–24—Did Jesus promise to give literally anything we ask in faith? - [Norman Geisler \(When Critics Ask\)](#)**

**PROBLEM:** On the face of it, this verse seems to be saying that God will grant any request we make of Him as long as we believe. On the other hand, Paul asked God three times to be relieved of his thorn in the flesh, and God refused (2 Cor. 12:8–9)

**SOLUTION:** There are limitations on what God will give, indicated both by the context and by other texts, as well as by the laws of God's own nature and the universe.

First of all, God cannot literally give us anything. Some things are actually impossible. For example, God cannot grant a request of a creature to be God. Neither can He answer a request to approve of our sin. God will not give us a stone if we ask for bread, nor will He give us a serpent if we ask for fish (cf. Matt. 7:9–10).

Second, the context of Jesus' promise in Mark 11 indicates that it was not unconditional, for the very next verse says "If you ... forgive" your brother then God will forgive your trespasses. Thus, there is no reason to believe that Jesus intended us to take His promise to give us "whatever things" we ask without any conditions.

Third, all difficult passages should be interpreted in harmony with other clear statements of Scripture. And it is clear that God does not promise, for example, to heal everyone for whom we pray in faith. Paul wasn't healed, though he prayed earnestly and faithfully (2 Cor. 12:8–9). Jesus taught that it was not the blind man's lack of faith that hindered his being healed. Rather, he was born blind "that the works of God should be revealed in him" (John 9:3). In spite of the Apostle Paul's divine ability to heal others (Acts 28:9), later he apparently could not heal either Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25ff) or Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20). It clearly was not unbelief that brought Job's sickness on him (Job 1:1). What is more, if faith of the recipient were the condition for receiving a miracle, then none of the dead Jesus raised would have come back to life, since the dead cannot believe!

Finally, when the rest of Scripture is taken into consideration there are many conditions placed on God's promise to answer prayer in addition to faith. We must "abide in Him" and let His Word "abide in us" (John 15:7). We cannot "ask amiss" out of our own selfishness (James 4:3). Furthermore, we must ask "according to His will" (1 John 5:14). Even Jesus prayed, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup [His death] pass from Me" (Matt. 26:39). Indeed, on all except God's unconditional promises, this "if it be your will" must always be stated or implied. For prayer is not a means by which God serves us. Rather, it is a means by which we serve God. Prayer is not a means by which we get our will done in heaven, but a means by which God gets His will done on earth.

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**"Nothing Wavering"** And shall not doubt in his heart. Mark 11:23. Doubting nothing. Acts 10:20. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. James 1:6+. It is a powerful phrase, and the word shows up elsewhere (Mt. 21:21; Rom. 4:20; 14:23). A. T. Robertson says, "It is a vivid picture of internal doubt." We must not only believe God, we must believe we believe God. Like the silly habit of going back to see whether you really did lock that door, an unsettled state of spiritual indecision is developed by doubting souls. They never "close the gate" behind them, they are forever reconsidering their decisions. They are never sure of their conversion or their consecration. They are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. When you have made any covenant with the Lord consider it final. If you did it honestly in the light you had you insult Him and your own intelligence by going over it all again. It becomes a vicious habit, and you can never be sure of anything. You never stand firmly on any point for fear you may be wrong. Close your gates behind you and move on, "nothing doubting," "for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." (Vance Havner)

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**Mark 11:23 - "Nothing Wavering"** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. James 1:6+.

The man who lacks wisdom is promised it, but he must ask in faith and not be like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Our Lord said we could move mountains if we commanded them to move and did not doubt in our hearts (Mk. 11:23). The positive side of that is in the next verse, which says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith." There we have the negative and positive again (Rom. 4:20). Some are saved from sin but not from staggering.

"Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Positive and negative! Are you walking by faith or wobbling in doubt? "We lie to God in prayer when we do not rely on God after prayer." James is very clear: "Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord."

Asking without believing marks a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (Vance Havner)

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### **Faith Moves Mountains?**

Of these sayings, or varieties of an original saying, emphasizing the limitless possibilities open to faith, Mark's form (followed in Mt 21:21) has a life setting in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, during Holy Week; Luke's form may be from the Q collection, in which case the form in Matthew 17:20 (an amplification of Jesus' words to the disciples after the healing of the epileptic boy at the foot of the mountain of transfiguration) combines features from Mark and Q.

In any case, Jesus illustrates the power of faith by analogies from the natural world. If faith is present at all, even if it is no bigger than a mustard seed, it can accomplish wonders: think what a large plant springs from something as tiny as a mustard seed. "We are not afraid when the earth heaves and the mountains are hurled into the sea"—so Psalm 46:2 (NEB) describes a convulsion of



nature that leaves men and women of God unshaken because he is their refuge and strength. It may be that Jesus is using such a form of words figuratively to describe the incalculable effects of prevailing faith.

But in Mark's account there may be some more explicit point in the form of words. In that account the words are addressed to the disciples after the incident of the cursing of the fig tree. There may not seem to be much to connect that incident with a lesson on the power of faith. The connection, however, may be provided by the place where, according to Mark, the words were spoken. They were spoken in the morning, as Jesus and his disciples made their way from Bethany to Jerusalem, crossing the Mount of Olives. So, in Mark's account, "this mountain" in the saying would be the Mount of Olives.

Now, in current expectation regarding the time of the end, the Mount of Olives played a special part. It would be the scene of a violent earthquake on the day of the Lord. "On that day," said one of the prophets (referring to the day when the God of Israel would take final action against the enemies of his people), "his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south" (Zech 14:4). If Jesus had this and related Old Testament prophecies in mind on his way across the Mount of Olives, his meaning might have been, "If you have sufficient faith in God, the day of the Lord will come sooner than you think." (Walter Kaiser, et al - [Hard Sayings of the Bible](#))

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### **The Sea and the Mountains - Henry Morris**

"For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:23).

On the third day of redemption week, the sight of the withered fig tree led to an instructive lesson on faith in God, the Lord Jesus assuring the disciples that real faith could even move mountains into the sea. In parallel, on the third day of creation week, He had literally called the mountains up out of the sea (Gen. 1:9-10)!

It was also on this day that the Lord had to severely rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees, beginning with two parables about a vineyard (Matt. 21:28-43). He reminded them that they had been placed in charge of God's vineyard on the earth, and had failed. Like the fig tree, there was no fruit for God from their service, and they must be removed.

Likewise, on day three of creation, the entire earth had been prepared as a beautiful garden, with an abundance of fruit to nourish every living creature (Gen. 1:11-12). It has been placed in man's care (Gen. 1:28-30; 2:15), but he has failed. Before the earth can become a beautiful garden again (Rev. 22:2), it must be purged, and the faithless keepers of the vineyard banished.

This third day of Passion Week was climaxed with His great discourse on the Mount of Olives, in which the Lord promised He would come again some day in power and great glory (Matt. 24). It was appropriate that He should then spend the night with His disciples there on the mountain, for the mount would call to memory that far-off third day of creation week when He had drawn all the mountains out of the sea. Also, the little Garden of Gethsemane—on its slope—would bring to mind the beautiful Garden of Eden and the verdant world He had planted everywhere that same day. Now, because of what He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem, the ground would some day be cleansed of its Curse and the world made new again. (Days to Remember)

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**Better Than Moving Mountains** - Mountains were once regarded as symbols of the steadfast and unmovable, but not any more. With his monster bulldozers, man can level peaks into plains. But, great as are his feats in moving the mountains of earth, he is not doing too well in the realm of the spirit. There he is playing with molehills.

Our Lord would have us see miracles in mountain-moving. He said: "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:23). Evidently our Lord expected believing prayer to do wonders. Moving a mountain is a mighty feat, any way you look at it.

We glory in what our machines can do but the church sits today before a range of obstacles and studies ways to tunnel through or climb over or detour around. It does not seem to occur to some of the brethren that there is another way to clear a path—by faith and prayer. Of course the collective body of believers fails because we fail as individuals. Have you come to a halt before a forbidding wall? Have you become reconciled to limitations that could be removed? Are you studying ways to circumvent the mountain when God says you can consign it to the sea? At any rate, we are trying to drill our way through by clever ingenuity or climb over by sheer determination or go around by dodging the issue. It is time for a miracle. One sits in religious gatherings and hears all kinds of clever schemes for moving mountains with ecclesiastical machinery. He hears little about going to our knees in prevailing prayer. We pay respect to prayer and coin pious phrases about faith, but the mountains are not moving. If only some of our convocations would turn in desperation to the Saviour's formula!

The history of the church abounds in records of mountain-movers who faced the impossible and ordered the mountain into the sea. They did not accomplish it with bulldozers. The weapons of their warfare were not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

Having said all this, let me remind you that, wonderful as moving mountains may be, it is not the supreme accomplishment. "... though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing" (I Corinthians 13:2). We Americans glory in the spectacular and sensational but there is something better than getting into headlines, even because of mighty faith. The greatest mountain-mover, without love, is nothing. Here is another scale of values. The manifestations of love outlined in I Corinthians 13 sound very homely: Love is longsuffering, kind, does not envy, is not proud; love behaves itself, is not easily provoked, not self-seeking, keeps no account of evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but in the truth; love bears all things, believes, hopes, endures all things. These are plain virtues the lowliest may practice in the home, the shop, at work or play. Love looks commonplace beside throwing mountains into the sea, but it rates high with God. One may do both of course, but we are suffering most today not so much from the presence of mountains that ought to be moved as from the absence of love that ought to be manifested. Our Saviour wrought miracles, but what means most to us today is His love. His love shed abroad in our hearts will mean more than all the mountains we move. (Vance Havner)

**Matthew 21:22 "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."**

- Mt 7:7,11 Mt 18:19 Mk 11:24 Lu 11:8-10 Joh 14:13-14 Jn 15:7 Jn 16:24 Jas 5:16 1Jn 3:22 1Jn 5:14-15

#### **Related Passages:**

John 14:13-14+ "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.  
14 "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

John 15:7+ (**CONDITIONS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER**) "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

1 John 3:22+ (**THE ROLE OF OBEDIENCE IN ANSWERED PRAYER**) and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

1 John 5:14-15+ (**CONDITIONS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER**) This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

### **ASKING, BELIEVING RECEIVING**

**And all things you ask** ([aiteo](#)) **in prayer** ([proseuche](#)), **believing** ([pisteuo](#) - present tense), **you will receive** ([lambano](#)) - What's the key to answered prayer (all things you ask)? Believing is the conditional particle, but don't misunderstand. Jesus is not telling us to have faith in faith. That is a false, very deceptive teaching. Jesus is not espousing [name it and you can claim it](#) if you believe hard enough or have enough faith (see also [Word of Faith](#), [Joel Osteen](#)). The reception of what you ask is conditioned by "Whatever you ask [in My name](#)." In other words asking [in My Name](#) is asking for those things that are in the will of God and in keeping with the purpose of God.

*The believer who wants what God wants  
can ask from God and receive it.*

--John MacArthur

As **John MacArthur** explains "Mountain-moving faith is unselfish, undoubting, and unqualified confidence in God. It is believing in God's truth and God's power while seeking to do God's will. The measure of such faith is the sincere and single desire that, as Jesus said, "the Father may be glorified in the Son." True faith is trusting in the revelation of God. When a believer seeks something that is consistent with God's Word and trusts in God's power to provide it, Jesus assures him that his request will be honored, because it honors Him and His Father. When God's commands are obeyed He will honor that obedience, and when any request is asked in faith according to His will He will provide what is sought. To do what God says is to do what God wants and to receive what God promises. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 281](#))

*The very real danger to most Christians*

*is not asking extravagantly but not asking at all.*

-- Mark Moore

**C H Spurgeon** - This gives us a grand cheque-book on the Bank of Faith, which we may use without stint. How wide are the terms: "all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing"! If we are enabled to pray the prayer of faith, we shall gain the blessing, be it whatever it may. This is not possible concerning things unpromised, or things not according to the divine will. Believing prayer is the shadow of the coming blessing. It is a gift from God, not a fancy of the human will, nor a freak of idle wishing. "Believing, ye shall receive;" but too often the believing is not there. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Akin** adds "**An important point of clarification:** True and believing prayer is not attempting to get God to change His will to fit our plans. It is a passionate pursuit to see God's plans accomplished in us! Prayer is not conjuring God up like some —genie in a bottle— obligated to grant us whatever we wish. Read Matt 6:9-10; Mark 14:36; John 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:23-24; and 1 John 5:14-15 before you draw such a foolish and erroneous theological conclusion. Let Scripture interpret Scripture as you apply —the analogy of faith." Praying in faith with mountain moving faith, our God will give us what we need to glorify His name. Here is a —house of prayer— you can bring your petitions to! In one of his hymns John Newton said it like this, —

*Thou are coming to King!*

*Large petitions with thee bring!*

*For His grace and power are such—*

*none can ever ask too much!*

**THOUGHT** - Be blessed by [Matt Foreman's beautiful vocal version](#). Father in Heaven enable us by Thy Spirit to make Newton's entire hymn the prayer of our heart for Your glory and honor. In Jesus' Name. Amen)

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**CARRY YOUR UMBRELLA!** And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matthew 21:22.

When it comes to praying in faith, most of us pray for rain but do not carry our umbrellas. We do not expect the answer according to Mark 11:24. One great Bible teacher was for a while perplexed by the grammar of that verse, "Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." But finally he stopped worrying about the grammar and believed God! The mountain moves when we ask in faith (Matthew 21:21). "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). Carry your umbrella! (Vance Havner)

**Matthew 21:23 When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"**

- **When He entered the temple:** Mk 11:27-33 Lu 19:47-48 Lk 20:1-8
- **the chief priests:** 1Ch 24:1-19
- **By what authority:** Ex 2:14 Ac 4:7 7:27

#### **Related Passages:**

Mark 11:27-33+ They \*came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders \*came to Him, 28 and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?" 29 And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 "Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me." 31 They began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 32 "But shall we say, 'From men?'—they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet. 33 Answering Jesus, they \*said, "We do not know." And Jesus \*said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Luke 20:1-8+ On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him, 2 and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?" 3 Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me: 4 "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" 5 They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' 6 "But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." 7 So they answered that they did not know where it came from. 8 And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."



James Tissot: Jesus' Authority Questioned

## RELIGIOUS LEADERS QUESTION JESUS' AUTHORITY

**When He entered the temple** ([hieros](#)) - Temple ([hieros](#)) speaks of the entire Temple complex. Lk 20:1+ adds "while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel." This encounter with the religious leaders occurred on Tuesday morning (I realize John MacArthur is a day later but I prefer to go with the traditional teaching on the Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday) and will lead to 3 parables (Mt 21:28-22:14) that describe God's coming judgment on these religious fakers! As the old sermon by Robert Lee says they will receive their "Pay day, some day!"

**Steven Cole** has [an interesting introduction](#) to this section on authority imagining himself as a reporter in Jerusalem interviewing a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

**The chief priests** ([archiereus](#)) and the **elders** ([presbuteros](#)) of the people came to Him while He was teaching ([didasko](#) in [present tense](#) - continually), and said, "By what authority ([exousia](#)) are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority ([exousia](#)) - Authority ([exousia](#)) is obviously their "sticking point" and in simple terms they are asking Jesus who gave Him the right and the might. They certainly could not argue with "the might" for they had just seen Him cleanse the Temple the day before and no one dared stop Him. So their focus would be on where He got the right to do these things and to teach the way He taught.

And it would take both "**right**" (He was God and the Temple was God's) and the **might** (the Court of the Gentiles was about 10 football fields in size and filled with money changers, lambs, pigeons, etc - it would have taken "might" to cleanse such a large area).

**C H Spurgeon** - Jesus returned to His Father's house, and there He was again met by His old antagonists. When He was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him; they had rallied their forces, and taken time to recall their courage. They interfered with Him as He was teaching, and demanded His authority for what He said and did. He had taken their breath away by His daring purgation of the temple, unarmed and unaided; and only after a night's interval dared they question His right to act as He had done. Now they put Him to the question: "By what authority doest Thou these things? And who gave Thee this authority?" That He did marvelous things was admitted; but in what official capacity did He act, and who placed Him in that office? This was carrying the war home: they struck out fiercely at their assailant. They hoped to wound Him in this point, and to overcome Him. Poor fools! They were not worthy of an answer from Him. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Mark Moore** points out that "there are more details given about this day in the life of Jesus than any other. Matthew devotes nearly one sixth of his gospel to it."

As [Akin](#) says "This man teaches with **authority**, cast out demons with **authority** and heals with **authority**. He does only what God can do! But they are not satisfied. They request his ordination papers. Show us your credentials! These are not honest questions. They want to destroy Him. They are not motivated by a willingness to know who He is and they have no interest in bringing their lives under His authority. Their goal is to ensnare Him, embarrass Him, and discredit Him. And they think they have found a way. If He admits He has no religious credentials, that He did not go to seminary or even Bible College, and that He is acting on His own authority, He will probably lose the respect and following of the people. His popularity ratings will tank and they can be finished with this troublemaker. On the other hand if He makes a claim to divine authority then they could charge Him with blasphemy, arrest Him and start the process for His destruction. Either way this country —hick from the sticks|| would be finished.

**Paul Apple** on **authority** - People today don't respond well to the **authority** of Jesus; to the **authority** of the Word of God; nobody is going to tell me what to do; I will read the bible to have it say what I want it to say; I will live my life the way I think best You can't have the salvation that Jesus offers without the **authority** that Jesus commands

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**Authority** ([1849](#))([exousia](#) from [éxesti](#) = it is permitted, it is lawful) means the power to do something and was a technical term used

in the law courts, of a legal right. "[Authority](#) or right is the dominant meaning (of exousia) in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousia** refers to delegated [authority](#) and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone. **Exousia** means "delegated authority." The word means also "the power of authority and of right." It was used in legal practice of delegated authority. Here it is used of our Lord as having that authority in Himself, not derived from others. **Exousia** is an important term in the Gospels. Many conflicts in Jesus' life and ministry turn on debates about authority or the idea that Jesus taught with an unparalleled authority (Mt 7:29; 8:9; 9:6, 8; 21:23-27; 28:18; Mk 1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 11:28-33; Lk 4:32, 36; 5:24; 7:8; 20:2-8).

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**Matthew Henry Concise - Mt 21:23-27** As our Lord now openly appeared as the Messiah, the chief priests and scribes were much offended, especially because he exposed and removed the abuses they encouraged. Our Lord asked what they thought of John's ministry and baptism. Many are more afraid of the shame of lying than of the sin, and therefore scruple not to speak what they know to be false, as to their own thoughts, affections, and intentions, or their remembering and forgetting. Our Lord refused to answer their inquiry. It is best to shun needless disputes with wicked opposers.

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**J C Ryle** - The spirit which prompted this demand is too evident to be mistaken. These men hated and envied Christ. They saw His influence increasing. They saw their own power waning. They resolved, if possible, to stop the progress of this new teacher; and the point on which they made their assault was His authority. His mighty works they ought to have examined. His teaching they ought, in all fairness, to have compared with their own Scriptures. But they refused to take either one course or the other. They preferred to call in question His commission.

Every true-hearted Christian who tries to do good in the world, must make up his mind to be treated like his Master. He must never be surprised to find, that the self-righteous and the worldly-minded dislike His ways. The lawfulness of his proceedings will be constantly called in question. He will be regarded as meddlesome, disorderly, and self-conceited, a pestilent fellow, and a troubler of Israel. (Acts 24:5; 1 Kings 18:17.) Scripture-readers, district-visitors, lay-agents, and un-ordained missionaries, are specially liable to meet with such treatment. And worst of all they will often meet with enemies, where they ought to find friends.

Let all who are attacked by the world for trying to do good, take comfort in the thought that they are only drinking of the cup which Christ drank. Their Master in heaven sympathizes with them. Let them work on patiently, and believe that, if they are faithful, their work will speak for itself. The world's opposition is sure to attend every really good work. If the servants of Christ are to cease from every movement which the world calls in question, they will soon come to an entire standstill. If we are to wait till the world approves our plans, and is satisfied with the propriety of our efforts, we shall never do anything on earth. ([Spiritual blindness of the chief priests and scribes,—mental dishonesty of prejudiced unbelievers](#))

**Matthew 21:24** Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things."

- I will also tell you Mt 10:16 Pr 26:4,5 Lu 6:9 Col 4:6

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:28+ and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"

Luke 20:2+ and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?"

### ANSWER MY QUESTION FIRST

**Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things"** - As was so often the case, Jesus responds to questions with a question of His own, a technique common in rabbinic debates. They recognized He was not avoiding their question, but He was leading them. He gives them somewhat of a conditional statement that if they first answer His question, He would tell them of His authority.

**Utley** - Jesus often used this second-question technique when dealing with those who tried to trick or trap Him (cf. Mk 2:6-9, 19, 25-26; 3:23-24; 10:3, 37-39; 12:14-16). He would be open with them if they would be open to Him (cf. v. 33).")



**Akin** - Jesus would have been a masterful chess player without a doubt. He brilliantly makes a counter move in verses 29-30 by asking the representative delegation from the Sanhedrin a question, —Jesus said to them, —I will ask you one question [lit. —one word]]; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.|| Jesus' counter-question was a common debating technique among rabbis in that day. And, it exposed their heart and motives. Jesus says let's look at the evidence of the one who paved the way for my coming and with whom I closely aligned myself: the ministry of John the Baptist. Interestingly, those who come to Jesus with hostile intentions never receive a direct or straight answer. Oh, they get a response, but it is one that forces them to think and reason. This is reinforced in our text as Jesus twice commands them, —answer me|| (v. 29, 30). This —sharp demand|| for an answer is found only in Mark. The implication is they lack the courage to give an honest answer.

**Wuest** - Our Lord meets their questions with another question. He says that He has one question to ask them. The one question is not contrasted to the two questions asked Him, but points to the simplicity of the issue. (Borrow [Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#) )

**C H Spurgeon** - Yes, Jesus answered. His answers are always complete, but seldom what his foes expect. The quibblers of our day need not be in too great a hurry to call their statements unanswerable: Jesus will answer for himself in due time. He says to these chief priests and elders, "I also will ask you one thing." Their question was met by another question, even as the rods of the Egyptian magicians, when turned into serpents, were met by Aaron's rod, which, as a serpent, swallowed up their rods. Frequently it will be wisdom not to reply to the quibblings of the enemies of the gospel, but to pose them with some mystery too deep for them. Our Lord's conditions were fair and reasonable: "If ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. " Apparently, the questioners raised no objection, for Jesus at once stated his question to them. 25-27. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - The late Bill Klem was one of major league baseball's best-known and powerful umpires. When he was behind the plate, he made it clear that he was completely in charge of everything that mattered. In one important game, it was the ninth inning. The batter hit the ball to left field. The runner on third ran for home with the potential winning run. The catcher crouched to make the tag. The runner, the catcher, and the umpire all collided and were laid out in the dirt. From one dugout, the players were screaming, "He's safe! He's safe!" In the other dugout, they were shouting, "He's out! He's out!" The fans in the stands were going wild. In the midst of all the confusion and noise, Bill Klem stood up, looked directly into the stands, raised his fist and exclaimed, "He ain't nothin' till I've called it!" Bill Klem made it clear that everyone had to submit to his authority.

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**John Stevenson** gives an interesting **illustration** introducing his message on Luke 20 - His name was Irwin Rommel. He was to be known as the Desert Fox. But before leading the Axis army in North Africa, Rommel was a commander in the German army as they invaded France in 1940. It was during that invasion that Rommel tells of having taken a ride in his command car to reconnoiter the front. He was driving through the Belgium hills when he rounded a turn and came face to face with a truck filled with enemy soldiers. Without missing a beat, Rommel was out of his command car and calling loudly to the soldiers, "You are all now prisoners of the German army. Just drive your truck in that direction and you will be processed accordingly." The soldiers in the truck nodded their agreement and moved to comply. The truck behind them followed suit. As did the truck behind that one. In amazement, Rommel watched while 20 truckloads of soldiers meekly surrendered, all because one man had spoken with authority.

One of the distinctive things about Jesus was that He spoke with a calm but unshakable authority. This set him apart from the rabbinical teachers of that day who were always having to quote the opinion of some earlier rabbi or expert. Jesus spoke from God. He was able to say, "Thus saith the Lord." And He even went further to say, "Thus saith ME."

He did not only speak with authority; He also ACTED with authority. He acted with authority when He commanded demons to leave those whom they had possessed. He acted with authority when He told a storm to be silent. He acted with authority when He told a lame man to walk, when He rebuked disease and it departed, and when He commanded a dead girl to get up. And He acted with authority when He came in and cleansed the Temple, driving out those who had come to make a profit instead of to listen to the Prophet.

Imagine what would be the reaction if an out-of-town carpenter showed up this Sunday in your church and began overturning pews and tossing around the offering plates. What would be your reaction? It would probably be the same as was seen by the Temple leaders: "What gives you the right to do these things? Just who do you think you are?" ([The Authority of the King - Luke 20:1-47](#))

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**Matthew 21:25** "The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?" And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?'"

- **baptism:** Mt 3:1-12 11:7-15 17:12,13 Mk 1:1-11 11:27-33 Lu 1:11-17,67-80 Lu 3:2-20 7:28-35 Joh 1:6,15,25-34 3:26-36
- **Then why:** Lu 20:5 Joh 3:18 5:33-36,44-47 10:25,26 12:37-43 1Jn 3:20

#### Related Passages:

Mark 11:30-31+ "Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me."31 They began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?'"

Luke 20:4-5+ "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" 5 They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'"



THE AUTHORITY FOR THE BAPTISMS PERFORMED BY JOHN

### JESUS PRESENTS A HORNS OF A DILEMMA

The meaning of *HORNS OF A DILEMMA* is in a situation in which one has to choose between things that are unpleasant or undesirable.

**The baptism (baptisma) of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?**- Jesus answered their question with a question that dealt with their rejection of John the Baptist who had called them (Pharisees and Sadducees) a "brood of vipers" when they approached him for baptism (Mt 3:7+). A simple question but one with "horns!" Jesus is not restricting **baptism** to John's water baptism but was referring to his entire ministry, especially hard preaching like "**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2+) and "**Bring forth** fruit in keeping with repentance." (Mt 3:8+) This was something the religious leaders absolutely refused to submit to. They saw no need for personal repentance. They surely rejected John's teaching about Jesus ""Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29+). To believe John's ministry had been ordained by would have required that they accept Jesus as the Messiah!

**Brian Bell** - Jesus was basically asking, are you prepared to recognize God-given authority when you see it? (clearly they were not!)

*When unbelief investigates spiritual truth,  
it is predisposed to reject it.*

-- John MacArthur

**And they began reasoning among (dialogizomai** - imperfect tense - over and over - picture them discussing Jesus' question futilely looking for a loophole) **themselves** - The question is simple -- was John's ministry was of divine or human origin. Jesus' question was "**loophole** - proof!" (**note**)

These serpentine men were acting on the basis of expediency rather than conviction. Their fear was how is it going to turn out for us (answering either way)? The religious leaders are at least smart enough to know they are "**in a pickle**." (in a quandary or some other difficult position.) (**see interesting origin of phrase**).

**Wuest on reasoning among themselves** - Conference in groups was scarcely possibly at this time. The same thought flashed through their minds. If they would accept the divine mission of the Baptist, they would charge themselves as a class with having rejected his baptism. This would give our Lord an advantage which He would not be slow to use. If they said that John's baptism was of purely human origin, they would place themselves in a dangerous position with regard to the crowds, even to the place of being stoned. The people might look upon their attribution to man's words, that which they held to be of God. Furthermore, John's martyrdom had deepened the regard with which he was held by the people. (Borrow **Mark in the Greek New Testament for the**

**Saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe ([pisteuo](#)) him** - These religious hypocrites were fools but they were not stupid and they saw the corner Jesus' question had painted them into.

**C H Spurgeon** - The question our Lord put to the chief priests and elders was simple enough had they been honest men; but as they had a game to play, they could not reply without great difficulty. Men-pleasers are obliged to be politicians, and see which way the land lies. Our Lord put his questioners on the horns of a dilemma. If John the Baptist was sent from heaven, why had they rejected him? That John was of men, they dared not assert; for their fear of the people silenced them. They were in a corner, and saw no way of escape, and therefore they pleaded ignorance: They answered Jesus, and said, "We cannot tell. " Which answer was no answer from them, but supplied him with a just and crushing reply to them: "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. " They could have told Jesus whence John's baptism was, but they would not; and he could have told them all about his divine authority, but he knew that no useful end would be answered, and therefore he declined to stay more. It is a solemn thing when love itself grows weary, and refuses further conversation. Our Lord's tone to these questioners is that of one who is dealing with hopeless creatures, who deserve no quarter, since they would make no use of leniency. They could not be won by gentleness; they must be shaken off exposed, and dethroned from the seat of power, before the eyes of those who had been misled by them. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - Actor and comedian W. C. Fields was an avowed agnostic, so he surprised his friends when they discovered him reading a Bible while on his deathbed. When asked why, Fields replied, "I'm looking for a loophole."

**Matthew 21:26 "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet."**

- **we fear the people** Mt 21:46 14:5 Isa 57:11 Mk 11:32 12:12 Lu 20:6,19 22:2 Joh 9:22 Ac 5:26
- **for:** Mk 6:20 Joh 5:35 10:41,42

#### **Related Passages:**

Mark 11:32+ "But shall we say, 'From men?'—they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet.

Luke 20:6+ "But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet."

### **FEAR OF MEN BRINGS A SNARE**

**But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people; for they all regard John as a prophet** - They did not fear God, but they did fear men. Pr 29:25 says "The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted." They were trapped in the "snare" set by Jesus! These hypocrites are exposed and in danger of death for Luke 20:6+ says "if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death." (See [Stoning in Judaism](#).)

**Akin** writes that "The fear of man hindered their movement toward Jesus. Their fear of what others would think paralyzed them. Their fear of what others might do. Their fear of losing face. Their fear of losing power and position and prestige. Be honest with yourself today. How much of your hesitation and alleged doubts and unanswered questions is really a mask to hide your fear of what faith in Christ might cost you socially, culturally, relationally, financially?"

**Paul Apple** - Remember the mission of John the Baptist laid out in John chapter 1 Here was one recognized as a prophet by the people. Not an intellectual problem as if they did not know the answer to their question; it was a moral problem; did not want to submit to the authority of Jesus in their hearts

**MacArthur** - John had clearly testified that Jesus was the Messiah. If John was a prophet whose words were true, they ought to believe his testimony about Christ. (Borrow [The MacArthur study Bible](#))

**John MacArthur** - If they said John's ministry and message were from men, they would lose what little credibility they had with the people and would even incite their ire, because the multitude still considered John to be a prophet. They themselves firmly believed that John was not a prophet, but they did not dare state that belief in public. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 288](#))

**Matthew 21:27 And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.**

- **We do not know.** Mt 15:14 16:3 23:16-28 Isa 6:10 28:9 29:10-12 42:19,20 56:10,11 Jer 8:7-9 Mal 2:6-9 Lu 20:7,8 Joh 9:30,40,41 Ro 1:18-22,28 2Co 4:3 2Th 2:9,10

#### **Related Passages:**

Mark 11:33+ Answering Jesus, they \*said, "We do not know." And Jesus \*said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Luke 20:7+ So they answered that they did not know where it came from. 8 And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

### **WE "GIVE UP"**

**And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know."** - The religious bigots cop out. They **"fold their cards,"** for Jesus had called their hand!

As [Akin](#) says their answer "We do not know" was a lie motivated by fear. They would rather keep their position and live a lie than submit to Christ and walk in the truth. Their problem was not dullness of mind but stubbornness of will. They had neither sincere motives or an open mind. Cowardice instead of courage had become their barometer."

**He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things-** They failed to answer, so He says He has no obligation to answer their question on His authority. In short they were between **"a between a rock and a hard place"** if they said ANYTHING, so they said NOTHING! Notice that their statement was dishonest because they do not say, "We don't want to answer Your question." That would have been a cowardly but honest answer. But to say "We do not know" was a lie. I would say about them what my wife used to say about my children when she knew they were guilty of lying - "Liar, liar, pants on fire!" "The Jewish leaders saved themselves from this dilemma by professing ignorance. (Wuest)

Though Jesus gave no answer, the analogy he used to their own question makes His view clear. His authority came from heaven. He did not say that he had no authority. Jesus refused to give them more light for they refused to accept the light that He had been clearly presented. (cf John 7:17+ - "If (**CONDITIONAL PROMISE**) anyone is **willing to do His will**, **[NB]**: NOT JUST HEAR HIS WILL IN HIS WORD BUT DO IT! he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.").

*Rejection of revelation already given  
is indeed a slender basis on which to ask for more.*

-- D A Carson

**D A Carson** - In one sense the Sanhedrin enjoyed not only the right but the duty to check the credentials of those who claimed to be spokesmen for God. But because they misunderstood the revelation already given in the Scriptures and rejected the witness of the Baptist, the leaders proved unequal to their responsibility. They raised the question of Jesus' authority; he raised the question of their competence to judge such an issue. (See [Matthew](#))

**John MacArthur** - They were not interested in learning the truth about either John or Jesus. Their sole purpose was to induce Jesus to again claim messiahship and divinity so they would have grounds for putting Him to death for blasphemy (cf. John 5:18; Matt. 22:15). (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 288](#))

**Mark Moore** - They simply refuse to admit the truth. And if they refused the truth before, they are not likely to receive it now. So Jesus doesn't waste his words. They're not looking for an answer but an opportunity. The Master is not about to give it to them. (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos](#) or [book format](#))

**NET NOTE** - Very few questions could have so completely revealed the wicked intentions of the religious leaders. Jesus' question revealed the motivation of the religious leaders and exposed them for what they really were—hypocrites. They indicted themselves when they cited only two options and chose neither of them ("We do not know"). The point of Matt 21:23–27 is that no matter what Jesus said in response to their question, they were not going to believe it and would in the end use it against him. **Neither will I tell you.** Though Jesus gave no answer, the analogy he used to their own question makes his view clear. His authority came from heaven.

**Stevenson** - There is a lesson here. It is that when you refuse to believe the teachings of Jesus, then no further teachings are

given. The criteria for receiving further spiritual truth is receiving and believing that which you have been given.

**William Hendriksen** adds - An important practical lesson is taught here. Christ's opponents failed to see the truth because they hardened themselves against it. The reason why many people know so little about Jesus and about the joy of living the Christian life is that they refuse to submit themselves to his will. The prayer of everyone should be: "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God" ([Ps. 143:10](#)). (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#))

**R Kent Hughes** - To these craven "leaders" Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things" (v. 8). This was another authoritative slam dunk by "gentle Jesus, meek and mild"—and in one of the temple courts! (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

**John MacArthur** - After three years of teaching and performing miracles, Jesus had given them sufficient proof that He was the Messiah. No more information would be forthcoming. There was no point in continuing to cast pearls before swine. The Jewish leaders had willfully rejected all the light they had seen; there was no reason to give them more. This was a pronouncement of judgment on the leadership of Israel. At His mock trial two days later, these men demanded of Jesus, "'If You are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God'" ([Luke 22:67-69](#)). There was nothing left for them but judgment, and He would sit on that judgment seat to render sentence on them. There is a limit to God's patience. Those who hard-heartedly reject the light will eventually be abandoned to judicial darkness. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**William Lane** comments (on parallel passages in Mark) that "The implied judgment upon the chief priests and elders in Mark 11:27–33 is sustained in the parable of the vineyard which immediately follows (Mark 12:1–11). The climax of that section serves both as the application of the parable and as the reproach of the authorities, who have rejected both John and Jesus. The leading idea of the whole section is that the leaders of the Jewish people have rejected the will of God." (See [The Gospel of Mark - Page 412](#))

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**Walter Kaiser** - [Lk 20:8](#) **Neither Will I Tell You?** Why did Jesus refuse to give a straight answer to those who asked him why he acted as he did?

It was during Holy Week, while he was walking in the temple precincts in Jerusalem, that some representatives of the Sanhedrin, Israel's supreme court (comprising chief priests, scribes, or teachers of the law, and elders, as we are told in Mk 11:27), came to Jesus and asked him, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?" By "these things" they meant not so much his teaching in the outer court but his cleansing of the temple, which had taken place the previous day. What right had he to put a stop to buying and selling within the bounds of the temple, or to forbid anyone to carry anything through the temple—to use the outer court as a short cut on their business errands? Many religious people might have agreed with him that the sacred area should not be turned into a bazaar, but a temple police force was stationed to protect its sanctity. Who authorized Jesus to act as he did?

His cleansing of the temple was what would have been recognized in Old Testament times as a prophetic action—the kind of action by which a prophet would occasionally confirm his spoken message and bring it home to the people around him. Jesus protested that the temple was being prevented from fulfilling its purpose as "a house of prayer for all nations" (see Is 56:7). Gentiles were not allowed to enter the inner courts, but in the outer court they might draw near to the true and living God and worship him, like those "Greeks" who, according to John 12:20, went up to worship at Passover. Because of this the outer court was sometimes called "the court of the Gentiles." But Gentiles were hindered in using it for its proper purpose if space within it was taken up by market stalls and the like. One of the latest Old Testament prophets had foretold how, when representatives of all the nations were to go up to Jerusalem to worship, "there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day" (Zech 14:21 RSV). Jesus' prophetic action was designed to enforce this lesson.

But by what authority did he perform such a prophetic action? By what authority did any of the ancient prophets perform prophetic actions? By the authority of God, in whose name they spoke to the people. So, when Jesus was asked, "Who gave you this authority?" the true answer was "God." Why then did he not say so? Because his questioners would not have believed him. He tested them first with another question, to see if they were capable of recognizing divine authority when they saw it. Reminding them of John the Baptist's ministry, he asked them whether John's authority was derived "from heaven [that is, from God] or from men." This put them on the spot: they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'From men?' all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet" (Lk 20:6). Could they recognize divine authority when it was expressed in the actions and teaching of John? If so, they might be expected to recognize it when it was manifested in the deeds and words of Jesus. But they professed themselves unable to say what the source of John's authority was. So Jesus said to them in effect, "If you cannot recognize divine authority when you see it in action, no amount of argument will convince you of its presence. If you cannot tell me by what authority John baptized, I will not tell you by what authority I do these things." There are some people who will demand authority for truth itself, forgetting that truth is the highest authority. (Go to



**Matthew 21:28** “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’

KJV Matthew 21:28 But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

BGT Matthew 21:28 Τ ὁ μὲν δοκεῖ; ἄνθρωπος ἔχεν τέκνα δύο. καὶ προσελθὼν τὸ πρῶτον εἶπεν· τέκνον, πάγε σήμερον ῥγίζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι.

NET Matthew 21:28 "What do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.'

CSB Matthew 21:28 "But what do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'My son, go, work in the vineyard today.'

ESV Matthew 21:28 "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.'

NIV Matthew 21:28 "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

NLT Matthew 21:28 "But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the older boy, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.'

- **what do you think:** Mt 17:25 22:17 Lu 13:4 1Co 10:15
- **A man :** Lu 15:11-32
- **had two sons:** Mt 20:5-7 Mk 13:34 1Co 15:58



Watchtower in the Vineyard  
([Bible-history.com](#))

## THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

**But what do you think?** - In context Jesus now drills down into the hard hearts of these religious hypocrites. They wanted a fight, so He was game to give it to them! And guess who would win? They wanted an answer, so Jesus serves up three parables for these vultures!

**Mark Moore** gives us the background for the three parables in Matthew - The Jewish leaders refuse to answer Jesus' question about John's authority (cf. § 132a). Jesus responds to their silence with three appropriate parables. Only Matthew includes all three; Mark and Luke only tell the parable of the vineyard. **Nonetheless, all three parables are designed to show how the Jews had rejected God's authority through Jesus.**

**With each parable both the rejection and punishment grow progressively worse.** In the first parable, those who reject Jesus are like the wicked son who didn't do what the father asked. In the second, they are like the wicked servants who kill the son and will receive just recompense. In the third parable, they are like those who rejected the king's invitation and will thus be rejected from the Messianic banquet. (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos or book format](#))

It is interesting that normally Jesus spoke parables so that the unbelieving could not understand (Mt 13:12-13+), but in these three parables He presents stories which these Gospel rejecting religious leaders could clearly understand (Mt 21:45+)! It was as if Jesus held a mirror up for them to see themselves as they really were!

**A man had two sons, and he came to the first**([protos](#)) **and said, 'Son**([teknon](#)) **go** ([hupago](#) - [present imperative](#)) **work** ([ergazomai](#) - [present imperative](#)) **today in the vineyard** ([ampelon](#)) - This parable begins simply. Sons were expected to work in their father's vineyard, so it begins by a request to **son** #1. Note that the father spoke to each son personally and individually. They could not use the excuse that they did not hear what he said and what he asked. Note also that the father asked for him to work **TODAY** not some time in the future.

**ESV Study Note** sets the stage for this parable linking it with the previous "test" the religious leaders had given to Jesus and His response - The parable of the **two sons** demonstrates the religious leaders' failure to respond rightly to John the Baptist's prophetic ministry. They hypocritically did not live up to their talk. The fruit of one's life ultimately proves whether or not one is obedient to God's message. A person's actions ultimately prove whether or not he is obedient to God. (Borrow [ESV Study Bible page 1866](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - By two parables the Lord Jesus deals with the religious leaders who had opposed him. In the first parable, that of the two sons, he exposes their fair but false dealings with God. "**A certain man had two sons.** " Both were bound to serve upon the family estate, and ought to have felt it a pleasure to do so. The first son was willful and wayward, but he was truthful, outspoken, and above-board in all that he did. His father said to him, "Son, go work to day in my vineyard; "a command which contains the father's claim, the son's duty, the immediate character of that duty, and the sphere of it. The command was plain enough, and so was the reply: "He answered and said, I will not. " It was rude, rebellious, ungrateful, unfilial; but it was hasty; and when a little interval had elapsed, quiet reflection brought the wayward boy to a better mind. "Afterward He repented, and went. " This was true repentance, for it led to practical obedience. He did not offer a verbal apology, or make a promise of future good behavior; he did far better, for he went about his father's business without more ado. Oh, that many, who have hitherto refused to obey the gospel, might now be changed in mind, hearken to the voice of God, and enter his service! ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry Concise - Mt 21:28-32** Parables which give reproof, speak plainly to the offenders, and judge them out of their own mouths. The parable of the two sons sent to work in the vineyard, is to show that those who knew not John's baptism to be of God, were shamed by those who knew it, and owned it. The whole human race are like children whom the Lord has brought up, but they have rebelled against him, only some are more plausible in their disobedience than others. And it often happens, that the daring rebel is brought to repentance and becomes the Lord's servant, while the formalist grows hardened in pride and enmity.

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Two Sons?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Parable of the Two Sons can be found in Matthew 21:28-32. The basic story is of a man with two sons who told them to go work in the vineyard. The first son refused, but later obeyed and went. The second son initially expressed obedience, but actually disobeyed and refused to work in the vineyard. The son who ultimately did the will of his father was the first son because he eventually obeyed. Jesus then likens the first son to tax collectors and prostitutes—the outcasts of Jewish society—because they believed John the Baptist and accepted "the way of righteousness" (v. 32), in spite of their initial disobedience to the Law.

The key interpretive point in understanding the Parable of the Two Sons comes in defining to whom Jesus is speaking. For that we need to look at the overall context of this passage. Matthew chapter 21 begins with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The whole point of Matthew's gospel is to show Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. The crowd responds by shouting Hosannas and praises to the King. The King's first act upon entering Jerusalem is to cleanse the temple (21:12-17). Afterwards, we see Jesus cursing a fig tree (21:18-22). This account may seem an isolated story, but Jesus was making a strong symbolic point. The fig tree is often symbolic of Israel (cf. Hosea 9:10; Joel 1:7). The fact that the fig tree had leaves but no fruit is symbolic of Israel's religious activity—i.e., all the trappings of spirituality, but no substance. Israel may have had the leaves of activity, but not the fruit of repentance and obedience to God, which is why Jesus tells them the prostitutes and tax collectors will enter the kingdom ahead of them (v. 31).

In Matthew 21:23-27, the religious authorities—the chief priests and elders—question Jesus' authority. Who is this Jesus who comes into Jerusalem receiving the praises of the masses and drives the moneychangers out of the temple? The stage is set for the showdown. It is in this context that Jesus tells three parables—the Two Sons, the Tenants, and the Wedding Feast. Each of these parables is told to the Jewish religious leaders, each illustrates their rejection of Jesus, and each pronounces judgment on Israel for their rejection of their Messiah. In the Parable of the Two Sons, the leaders of Israel are the second son who claimed obedience, but

did not do the will of the father.

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## **James Smith- THE TWO SONS Matthew 21:28–32**

This parable begins with Christ's "What think ye?" and is eminently fitted to make us think. Some perish for want of thought, and many more for wrong thinking. The priests and elders had been asking Him, "By what authority doest Thou these things?" Christ answers their question by holding up this parable as a mirror before their eyes that they might be convinced of their sins. The way to understand the authority of Christ is to discover our real state before Him. Those who pride themselves in their own supposed goodness will always remain in ignorance of Christ's authority and saving power.

I. What the Father Commanded. "Son, go work to-day in My vineyard" (v. 28). The Father's vineyard needs workers; who should be more interested than the Son? Observe the—

1. GROUND OF THE FATHER'S CLAIM. "Son," (v. 28). Plenty of hirelings may be got for wages, but love ought to constrain a son. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5:14). If we are the sons of God, surely our Father has the first claim upon our time and strength and substance. Our Father may hire strangers to serve Him (Isa. 7:20), but sons are commanded.

2. DESIRE OF THE FATHER'S HEART. "Work" (v. 28). What a grief it must be to our God to see so much work to be done and so many of His sons idle! Work is pleasing to the Father, good for the vineyard, and profitable for the Son. The idle soul shall suffer hunger (Prov. 19:15). Our Father has a multitude of talkative sons, but the labourers are few.

3. URGENCY OF THE FATHER'S REQUEST. "To-day." The time for serving the Lord is always NOW. Some of the younger sons say, "Wait till I get a little more experience." Some of the older sons say, "It is not worth my while beginning now;" or they are thinking about retiring from the vineyard. Go, work to-day, this present day of salvation, for "the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). "Wherefore the Holy Ghost saith, TO-DAY" (Heb. 3:7).

II. What the Sons Said. In the case of the first we have—

1. A DECIDED REFUSAL. "I will not" (v. 29). This language reveals the spirit of selfish indifference to the Father's desire. In plain words it is this: "I have something else of my own to look after, and have not time to work in your vineyard." What cares the selfish Christian for the perishing millions, or the grieving of the Father's heart, if their own little plans and purposes can only be attended to. This language also betrays a heart in open rebellion. "I will not." A life opposed to the Father's will and out of sympathy with the Father's purpose. The other son answered with—

2. A READY CONSENT. "I go" (v. 30). He speaks with marked respect, "I go, sir." Judging from his talk he has a great reverence for his father and a great zeal for his work. His words are smoother than butter. The descendants of this oily-lipped professor have not yet ceased from among us. Yet his instant decision and prompt reply to the father's urgent command should be copied by every son. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

III. What the Sons Did. There is often a vast difference between a man's profession and his actions. "Whither of them twain did the father's will?" It is not which of them talked the best or made the loudest profession? By their deeds are they justified or condemned. His Word is fulfilled in our doing of it, not in our talking about it.

1. THE ONE REPENTED AND OBEYED. Repentance always precedes the doing of the will of God. The bold, self-willed rebel is the first to yield and obey. Don't despair of the restoration of the loud-mouthed, disobedient backslider, or of the conversion of the defiant sceptic. "Afterward, he repented and went." Those who go willingly into the vineyard of God's service will find grace sufficient and a holy joy in pleasing Him.

2. THE OTHER PROMISED AND FAILED. "He said, I go, sir, and went not." All who go not at God's bidding into the field of service for Him are disobedient and rebellious children, no matter how nicely they may talk about "the Lord's work." Talking about ministers, churches, and religion is not working for God any more than warming your hands at the fire is gathering grapes. Not every one that saith, "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the kingdom, but he that doeth the will of My Father. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5).

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## **CHRIST IS OPPOSED Matthew 21:28–46 - Croft Pentz**

I. The problem of opposition—vv. 28–32

A. Story—vv. 28–30. One son said he wouldn't work, but later changed his mind and went to work. Another son said he would work, but didn't go.

B. Sin—v. 31. Here Jesus says that harlots (prostitutes) and publicans (tax collectors) would enter heaven before the self-righteous Pharisees. Harlots and publicans could enter heaven because they repented.

C. Salvation—v. 32. The self-righteous people did not accept the preaching of John the Baptist. Good works do not produce salvation (Eph. 2:8–9). However, salvation does produce good works.

## II. The persecution of opposition—vv. 33–39

### A. The parable—v. 33

1. Winepress. Wine was made from grapes with a winepress.
2. Tower. A watchtower was a place for the workers to stay.
3. Let it out—Let it out is a phrase that means "to rent."
4. Husbandmen. Farmers or caretakers were husbandmen.

B. The preparation—v. 34. The owner sent servants to collect the fruit and profits from the farm.

C. The persecution—vv. 35–38. The servants were killed.

D. The prophecy—v. 39. This is a picture of how Christ would be rejected by mankind (cf. John 1:11–12).

## III. The punishment because of opposition—vv. 40–46

A. Story—v. 40. Here we see a comparison of what Christ will do to the wicked sinners. The wicked husbandmen were cast out. Christ will cast sinners out at the last judgment (Rev. 20:11–15).

B. Separation—v. 41. Destruction, or separation from God. This really means hell.

C. Stone—vv. 42–44. Jesus quoted from Psalm 118:22–23. Jesus is the stone the Jews rejected, but He became the chief cornerstone of the building.

1. Christ the stone—v. 42. Build upon Christ and you'll have the security of a solid foundation.

2. Producing fruit—v. 43. You must show fruit by your works.

3. Power of the stone—v. 44. The stone will break our will, if we humble ourselves. If not, the stone will fall upon us, grinding us into powder.

D. Story understood—vv. 45–46. The people then understood His teaching and saw that Christ was referring to their own self-righteousness

## Matthew 21:29 "And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he regretted it and went.

KJV Matthew 21:29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

BGT Matthew 21:29 ὁ ποκριθεῖς ἐπεν· ὁ θλῶ, στερὸν δὲ μεταμελήθεις πλθεν.

NET Matthew 21:29 The boy answered, 'I will not.' But later he had a change of heart and went.

CSB Matthew 21:29 "He answered, 'I don't want to!' Yet later he changed his mind and went.

ESV Matthew 21:29 And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went.

NIV Matthew 21:29 " 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

NLT Matthew 21:29 The son answered, 'No, I won't go,' but later he changed his mind and went anyway.

NRS Matthew 21:29 He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went.

NJB Matthew 21:29 He answered, "I will not go," but afterwards thought better of it and went.

NAB Matthew 21:29 He said in reply, 'I will not,' but afterwards he changed his mind and went.

YLT Matthew 21:29 And he answering said, 'I will not,' but at last, having repented, he went.

MIT Matthew 21:29 He answered, "I will not!" But later on he had a change of heart and went.

■ **I will not:** Mt 21:31 Jer 44:16 Eph 4:17–19

■ **he regretted:** Mt 3:2–8 2Ch 33:10–19 Isa 1:16–19 55:6,7 Eze 18:28–32 Da 4:34–37 Jon 3:2,8–10 Lu 15:17,18 Ac 26:20 1Co 6:11 Eph 2:1–13

## Related Passages:

Matthew 21:32 “For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse ([metamelomai](#)) afterward so as to believe him.

## FIRST SON REFUSES THEN REGRETS AND OBEYS

And he answered, ‘I will ([thelo](#) - present tense - expressed his inclination) **not**’ ([ou](#) - absolutely not); **but** (term of contrast) afterward he regretted ([metamelomai](#)) it and went ([aperchomai](#)) - CSB = ‘I don’t want to!’ He initially refuses to bend his will to the will of his father. He has a change of mind because he regrets his initial response to his father. Normally [metamelomai](#) describes more of an emotional reaction (like Judas’ feeling remorse for betraying Jesus and facing eternal punishment), but in this context the word [metamelomai](#) involves more than just a change of mind, for the son regrets his initial response and follows up with action. The more common verb for change of mind and change of direction of one’s life is [metanoia](#).

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**Regretted** (changed mind) ([3338](#)) [metamelomai](#) from **metá** = denoting change of place or condition + **mélomai**, = be concerned) means “to change one’s mind about something, and feel remorse or regret (Mt 27:3) or to think differently afterward (the sense in Heb 7:21). The idea is changing one’s mind or purpose after having done something regrettable. **Metamelomai** is more of an **emotional response**—a sense of regret or remorse. It’s not necessarily true repentance unless it leads to a genuine turning of heart and action (*metanoia*).

[Complete Biblical Library](#) Metamelomai is composed of the two Greek terms meta, “after,” and melō, “I care, I am concerned for.” The basic meaning is “to feel regret, to repent, to feel sorrow.” In classical Greek it can mean “to change one’s mind,” and it cannot always be clearly distinguished from metanoēō, “I repent” (cf. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, p.256).

**Septuagint Usage** The translators of the Septuagint used metamelomai to translate three Hebrew words, but one is most common (seven times out of nine)—the niphal of nācham (“to repent, be sorry”). Metamelomai suggests a “change of mind” (Exodus 13:17). It does not necessarily imply a sense of error, but it emphasizes the feeling of sorrow (e.g., 1 Samuel 15:35 [LXX 1 Kings 15:35], the Lord “repented” [regretted] He had made Saul king; cf. 1 Chronicles 21:15). In fact, God’s great love and mercy may effect a change in His mind (Psalm 106:45 [LXX 105:45]), but His oath is unchangeable (Psalm 110:4 [LXX 109:4]).

**New Testament Usage** Metamelomai does not join with metanoēō in the New Testament to describe conversion or repentance in the Biblical sense. In fact, some distinction may be preserved, as the example of Judas, who regretted (metamelomai) betraying Christ, suggests. He in no way is regarded as “repentant” in a spiritual sense (Matthew 27:3). Trench, quoting the English theologian Chillingworth, goes so far as to say that metamelomai in no way suggests any forgiveness of sins. Only metanoia (3211), he contends, signifies a “thorough change of the heart and soul, of the life and actions” (Trench, *ibid.*). However, Matthew hints at a relationship between metamelomai and repentance or at least the movement toward repentance (Matthew 21:32 of “repenting” [metamelomai] at the preaching of John the Baptist).

Paul’s usage in 2 Corinthians 7:8 maintains a distinction between regret and repentance. Paul regretted his indicting letter to the Corinthians, but he does not attempt to alter its effect. In fact, if it led them to repentance he was delighted.

The Hebrews 7:21 citation of Psalm 110:4 emphasizes God’s firm commitment, His absence of regret, in making Christ high priest. This reaffirms God’s covenant and ensures His steadfast faithfulness and purpose

**TDNT - Abridged** - 1. Unlike metanoēin, which means “change of heart,” metamélesthai means the “experiencing of remorse.” The two may, of course, converge. Aristotle criticizes the latter as a sign of inconstancy, and the Stoics reject both on similar grounds. The preaching of the Cynics and Pythagoreans, however, gives them positive force as it arouses guilt and summons to conversion.

2. The LXX hazards the phrase that God repents, using both words in this connection (1 Sam. 15:35; Amos 7:3). Yet God’s repentance does not overthrow his judgment (Num. 23:19 etc.). He may reject in spite of his grace (1 Sam. 15:35) no less than renew his grace in spite of his judgment (1 Chron. 21:15). This tension continues in Judaism, in which God is the God both of judgment and of mercy. In humans the LXX distinguishes between remorse, which may not be pleasing to God (Ex. 13:17), and repentance, although with some assimilation (cf. Jer. 4:28 and 20:16). Remorse sees the bitter end of sin, repentance breaks free from it. The result of sin brings remorse, a divinely commissioned call brings repentance.



3. In general, Judaism distinguishes the narrower *metánoia* from the more general *metaméleia*. Philo can call the latter the presupposition and proof of forgiveness, but Josephus senses that *metánoia* goes further with its implication of a change of will.

4. *metanoieín* and *metánoia* take precedence in the NT. The only instances of *metamélomai* are in Matt. 21:29, 32; 27:3; 2 Cor. 7:8; Heb. 7:21 (quoting Ps. 110:4). In Matt. 21:28ff. the son who refuses to work changes his mind and goes, but the opponents of Jesus refuse to do so when they hear the call of the Baptist. In Matt. 27:3 Judas suffers remorse when he sees the result of his betrayal. His suicide shows that this is no true repentance. In 2 Cor. 7:8ff. Paul does not “regret” sending a severe letter (although he had regretted it), because it has led to “repentance” (*metánoian*) in the readers — a “repentance” which brings “no regret” (*metánoia ametamélētos*). In this passage “being sorry” is plainly distinguished from repenting. Paul uses *ametamélētos* again in Rom. 11:29, where he says that God’s gifts and calling are irrevocable. The same thought of God’s faithfulness occurs in Heb. 7:21: God has pledged with an oath that the institution of the eternal high priest is unchangeable, and he will not change his mind. The NT, then, has a clear sense of the distinction between the terms; it reserves *metánoia* for the divinely effected change of heart which leads to salvation. (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

**METAMELOMAI** - 5V - change his mind(1), feel remorse(1), felt remorse(1), regret(2), regretted(1). Matt. 21:29; Matt. 21:32; Matt. 27:3; 2 Co. 7:8; Heb. 7:21

**Matthew 21:30 “The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I will, sir’; but he did not go.**

- **did not go:** Mt 23:3 Eze 33:31 Ro 2:17-25 Titus 1:16

## SECOND SON'S YES IS A NO GO

**The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I will, sir’; but he did not go-** Sir is [kurios](#) which can mean master, owner indicating respect. He said the right words, but did the wrong action! A good start was followed by a bad ending. He was like many today who profess to believe the Gospel but whose lives fail to demonstrate that they are new creations in Christ (2Co 5:17+).

**David Guzik** adds - There are many churchgoers that imitate the second son.

- They admit that the Word of God is true.
- They intend to get serious about it someday.
- They talk about doing the Father’s work.
- They keep up the external appearance of religion, but their heart is not right with God.
- They think that words and promises are enough.
- They are sinning against the light, because they know better. This is dangerous, because it is lying to the Holy Spirit; it is dangerous, because it hardens the conscience.

**Spurgeon** - “The second son said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he went not; and these people do not go. They talk of repenting, but they do not repent. They speak of believing, but they never believe. They think of submitting to God, but they have not submitted themselves to him yet. They say it is time they broke up the fallow ground, and sought the Lord, but they do not seek him. It all ends in a mere promise.”

**John MacArthur** - Jesus’ point in this story is that doing is more important than mere saying. It is, of course, best for a person to say he will do God’s will and then do it. But it is immeasurably better to at first refuse His will and then repent and do it than to hypocritically agree to do it but not. In this context, the doing of God’s will relates to acceptance of the gospel, of receiving Jesus as the Messiah and as Savior and Lord. (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - The second was of milder mood, and blander manner. To him the father spoke as to the elder, and the reply was verbally all that he could desire: “**I go, sir.**” As if it were a matter of course, with exemplary politeness he bade his father consider that he was fully at his disposal. He assented and consented; he was orthodox and precise. He had an easy, natural religiousness, which strongly contrasted with the blunt ungodliness of his brother. But note those words: “and went not.” His fine phrases and fair promises were deceit and falsehood. He never went to the vineyard, much less lifted pruning-knife or spade. His

father's vineyard might go to ruin for aught he cared; yet all the while he was bowing and scraping, and promising what he never meant to perform. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:31 "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They \*said, "The first." Jesus \*said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.**

KJV Matthew 21:31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

BGT Matthew 21:31 τ ς κ τ ν δ ο πο ησεν τ θ λημα το πατρ ς; λ γουσιν· πρ το ς. λ γει α το ς ησο ς· μ ν λ γω μ ν π ο τελ ναι κα α π ρ ναι προ γουσιν μ ς ε ς τ ν βασιλε αν το θεο .

NET Matthew 21:31 Which of the two did his father's will?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes will go ahead of you into the kingdom of God!

CSB Matthew 21:31 "Which of the two did his father's will?" "The first," they said. Jesus said to them, "I assure you: Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you!

ESV Matthew 21:31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.

NIV Matthew 21:31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

NLT Matthew 21:31 "Which of the two obeyed his father?" They replied, "The first." Then Jesus explained his meaning: "I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do.

NRS Matthew 21:31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.

NJB Matthew 21:31 Which of the two did the father's will?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'In truth I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you.

NAB Matthew 21:31 Which of the two did his father's will?" They answered, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you.

YLT Matthew 21:31 which of the two did the will of the father?' They say to him, 'The first.' Jesus saith to them, 'Verily I say to you, that the tax-gatherers and the harlots do go before you into the reign of God,

MIT Matthew 21:31 Who of the two actually carried out his father's will? They replied, "The first one." Jesus said, "I assure you that tax-takers and streetwalkers will make it into God's kingdom ahead of you.

- **Which of the two did the will of his father:** Mt 7:21 12:50 Eze 33:11 Lu 15:10 Ac 17:30 2Pe 3:9
- **The first:** 2Sa 12:5-7 Job 15:6 Lu 7:40-42 19:22 Ro 3:19
- **Truly :** Mt 5:18 6:5 18:3
- **the tax collectors:** Mt 9:9 20:16 Lu 7:29,37-50 15:1,2 19:9,10 Ro 5:20 9:30-33 1Ti 1:13-16

## WHO ENTERS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

**Which of the two did the will ([thelema](#)) of his father?"** - Jesus is addressing this question to chief priests and elders who had tried to corner him regarding where He got His authority. What was the will of the father? to work in the vineyard.

**They \*said ([historical present tense](#)), "The first."** - Good answer. But bad answer for them! One son worked. The other son refused to work. Right words followed by wrong actions are like living a lie. The Jewish religious leaders were good at talking about religion and God, but refused to have a personal relationship with God.

**John MacArthur** - After His opponents gave the only possible answer to His question, Jesus showed them their connection to the parable. He informed them that, although their answer to His question was right, their response to Him and His ministry was wrong and wicked. Their own words condemned them. They did not correspond to "the latter" son, who did the father's will, but to the former, who did not do it. "They say things, and do not do them," Jesus said on a later occasion (Matt. 23:3). They claimed to obey

God, but their actions denied that He had any place in their hearts. They claimed to be longing for the Messiah and lauded His name; but when He came, they would not have Him. (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

**Jesus \*said ([historical present tense](#)) to them, “Truly ([amen](#)) I say** (pay attention to these "Amen" declarations) **to you that the tax collectors ([telones](#)) and prostitutes ([porne](#)) will get into the kingdom of God before you-** This true saying to these religious hypocrites would **cut to the quick** so to speak for Jesus mentions two classes of Jewish society which the religious leaders found detestable and abhorrent, tax collectors and whores! The **tax collectors** were hated by the Jews (not only the religious leaders), but it was not a crime to be a tax collector. The crime of the **tax collectors** was in defrauding and extorting the people which usually "went with the territory!" Not to mention that these "traitors" collected taxes for the Roman government and adding a surcharge, which they would pocket. **prostitutes ([porne](#))** were considered grossly immoral with no chance of receiving God's mercy. And yet here Jesus says these two hatred groups would get into the Kingdom of God if they later repented!

**D A Carson** notes that "The shock value of Jesus' statement can only be appreciated when the low esteem in which tax collectors were held, not to mention prostitutes, is taken into account." (See [Expositor's Bible Commentary- Page 97](#))

**John MacArthur** adds that **'before you** does not mean that the unbelieving leaders would eventually enter the Kingdom, because no unbeliever will ever enter. Jesus simply used the expression to show God's reversal of man-made standards for salvation. The tax-gatherers and harlots were nearer the kingdom than the chief priests and elders, not because they were inherently more righteous or acceptable to God, but because they were more ready to acknowledge their need for God's grace than the self-satisfied priests and elders. Jesus' point was that claims to religion do not qualify a person to enter the kingdom, and even gross sin, when repented of, will not keep a person out. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 290](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - Jesus made the hypocritical ecclesiastics judges in a case which was indeed their own. He asked them, "Whether of them twain did the will of his father? " Only one reply was possible: They say unto him, "The first ." It was clear that the first son, despite his rough refusal when he first heard his father's command, was after all the doer of the father's will. Then Jesus pointed out that the publicans and the harlots were like the first son; while the chief priests and elders of the people, with all their pretty professions, were deceitful and disobedient like the second son. They had professed great reverence for the divine Word; but when it came by John, they did not repent that they might believe him.. Open sinners, who had seemed to refuse the voice of God, did actually believe him, and so, by heeding John's ministry of righteousness , went into the kingdom of God before the more likely classes. What must these self-satisfied priests and elders have thought when they heard publicans and harlots placed before them? Gnashing a their teeth, they planned murder in their hearts. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Mark Moore** - This is a simple parable. Jesus says, "It's not those who talk the right talk that honor God, but those who walk the right walk." While this is obvious to us, it wasn't to them. You see, in Middle Eastern culture to speak back to one's father was scandalous, perhaps even worse than disobedience. Thus Jesus' parable offers not a choice between good and bad but between two evils. This is the first time that Jesus openly applies one of his parables to the Jewish leaders (Carson, p. 449). They are scandalized by it. Why would tax collectors and prostitutes enter the kingdom ahead of religious folks? According to the story, they repented and did what God asked them to do. Now, the Pharisees would be shocked at Jesus' implication that they were not working for God. Their lives were devoted to his work ... or so they thought. The work God requires is not so much "church business," but trusting Christ. Jesus put it this way, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (Jn 6:29). At first the tax collectors and prostitutes rejected God's plan through their wicked lifestyles. But when they heard John, they repented and were baptized and subsequently followed Jesus. Their leaders, however, talk about doing God's will, but are not obedient to it. For when John came preaching a baptism of repentance, they refused to submit (Lk 7:30). And now that Jesus stands before them, they are trying to figure out a way to kill him. (See [The Chronological Life of Christ - Page 494](#) - this [resource highly recommended available in Logos or book format](#))

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**Tax collectors** (publicans) ([5057](#)) **telones** From **telos** = tax + **onéomai** = to buy) means a reaper of the taxes or customs, tax-collector, one who pays to the government a certain sum for the privilege of collecting the taxes and customs of a district. The public revenues of the Greeks and Romans were usually farmed out. Among the latter, the purchasers were chiefly of the equestrian order and were distinguished as being of a higher class because they rode horses, or they were at least persons of wealth and rank like Zacchaeus who is called the chief tax collector (architelones [754](#) in Lu 19:2). These farmers also had subcontractors or employed agents who collected the taxes and customs at the gates of cities, in seaports, on public ways and bridges. These, too, were called **telomnai** (pl.), publicans, or eklégontes (n.f.), (ek [1537], out of, + légo [3004], in its original sense meaning to collect), those who collected out of the people. Such publicans in countries subject to the Roman Empire were the objects of hatred and detestation so that none but persons of worthless character were likely to be found in this employment.

**John MacArthur** gives this background on **tax collectors** - The Roman occupation of Israel involved more than just a military presence; the nation was also subject to Roman taxation. The taxes in Galilee, for example, were forwarded by tax collectors to Herod Antipas, and by him to Rome. Antipas sold tax franchises

to the highest bidder, and such franchises were a lucrative business. Tax collectors had a certain amount that they were required to collect, and whatever they collected beyond that they were permitted to keep (cf. Luke 3:12-13). In addition to the poll tax (on everyone, including slaves), income tax (about one percent), and land tax (one tenth of all grain, and one fifth of all wine and fruit), there were taxes on the transport of goods, letters, produce, using roads, crossing bridges, and almost anything else the rapacious, greedy minds of the tax collectors could think of. All of that left plenty of room for larceny, extortion, exploitation, and even loan sharking, as tax collectors loaned money at exorbitant interest to those who were unable to pay their taxes. Tax collectors also employed thugs to physically intimidate people into paying, and to beat up those who refused. (Luke 1-5, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 2009], 330)

**TELONES - 21x in 20v** - not found in the Septuagint. Mt. 5:46; Mt. 9:10; Mt. 9:11; Mt. 10:3; Mt. 11:19; Mt. 18:17; Mt. 21:31; Mt. 21:32; Mk. 2:15; Mk. 2:16; Lk. 3:12; Lk. 5:27; Lk. 5:29; Lk. 5:30; Lk. 7:29; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 15:1; Lk. 18:10; Lk. 18:11; Lk. 18:13

**Prostitutes** (4204) **porne** from **perano** - to sell. Porno-, as prefix in pornographic) is a woman who practices sexual immorality as a profession.

**PORNE** - 17v - Matt. 21:31; Matt. 21:32; Lk. 15:30; 1 Co. 6:15; 1 Co. 6:16; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25; Rev. 17:1; Rev. 17:5; Rev. 17:15; Rev. 17:16; Rev. 19:2

**Will** (2307) **thelema** from **thelo** = to will with the "-ma" suffix indicating the result of the will = "a thing willed") generally speaks of the result of what one has decided. One sees this root word in the feminine name "**Thelma**." In its most basic form, **thelema** refers to a wish, a strong desire, and the willing of some event. (**Note:** See also the discussion of the preceding word **boule** for comments relating to thelema).

**Zodhiates** says that **thelema** is the "Will, not to be conceived as a demand, but as an expression or inclination of pleasure towards that which is liked, that which pleases and creates joy. When it denotes God's will, it signifies His gracious disposition toward something. Used to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure. ([Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**Thelema** has both an objective meaning ("what one wishes to happen" or what is willed) and a subjective connotation ("the act of willing or desiring"). The word conveys the idea of desire, even a heart's desire, for the word primarily expresses emotion instead of volition. Thus God's will is not so much God's intention, as it is His heart's desire.

**THELEMA - 54V** - Matt. 6:10; Matt. 7:21; Matt. 12:50; Matt. 18:14; Matt. 21:31; Matt. 26:42; Mk. 3:35; Lk. 12:47; Lk. 22:42; Lk. 23:25; Jn. 1:13; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:30; Jn. 6:38; Jn. 6:39; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 7:17; Jn. 9:31; Acts 13:22; Acts 21:14; Acts 22:14; Rom. 1:10; Rom. 2:18; Rom. 12:2; Rom. 15:32; 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 7:37; 1 Co. 16:12; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 8:5; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:1; Eph. 2:3; Eph. 5:17; Eph. 6:6; Col. 1:1; Col. 1:9; Col. 4:12; 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Thess. 5:18; 2 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 2:26; Heb. 10:7; Heb. 10:9; Heb. 10:10; Heb. 10:36; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 2:15; 1 Pet. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:19; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Jn. 2:17; 1 Jn. 5:14; Rev. 4:11

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**NET NOTE - TECHNICAL NOTE** - Verses 29–31 involve a rather complex and difficult textual problem. The variants cluster into three different groups: (1) The first son says "no" and later has a change of heart, and the second son says "yes" but does not go. The second son is called the one who does his father's will. This reading is found in the Western MSS (D it). But the reading is so hard as to be nearly impossible. One can only suspect some tampering with the text, extreme carelessness on the part of the scribe, or possibly a recognition of the importance of not shaming one's parent in public. (Any of these reasons is not improbable with this texttype, and with codex D in particular.) The other two major variants are more difficult to assess. Essentially, the responses make sense (the son who does his father's will is the one who changes his mind after saying "no"): (2) The first son says "no" and later has a change of heart, and the second son says "yes" but does not go. But here, the first son is called the one who does his father's will (unlike the Western reading). This is the reading found in (x) C L W (Z) 0102 0281 f1 33 and several versional witnesses. (3) The first son says "yes" but does not go, and the second son says "no" but later has a change of heart. This is the reading found in B Θ f13 700 and several versional witnesses. Both of these latter two readings make good sense and have significantly better textual support than the first reading. The real question, then, is this: Is the first son or the second the obedient one? If one were to argue simply from the parabolic logic, the second son would be seen as the obedient one (hence, the third reading). The first son would represent the Pharisees (or Jews) who claim to obey God, but do not (cf. Matt 23:3). This accords well with the parable of the prodigal son (in which the oldest son represents the unbelieving Jews). Further, the chronological sequence of the second son being obedient fits well with the real scene: Gentiles and tax collectors and prostitutes were not, collectively, God's chosen people, but they did repent and come to God, while the Jewish leaders claimed to be obedient to God but did nothing. At the same time, the external evidence is weaker for this reading (though stronger than the first reading), not as widespread, and certainly suspect because of how

neatly it fits. One suspects scribal manipulation at this point. Thus the second reading looks to be superior to the other two on both external and transcriptional grounds. But what about intrinsic evidence? One can surmise that Jesus didn't always give predictable responses. In this instance, he may well have painted a picture in which the Pharisees saw themselves as the first son, only to stun them with his application (v. 32).

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Spurgeon - (full sermon) [A sermon to open neglecters and nominal followers of religion](#) Matthew 21:31–32

There is, my dear friends, the same gospel to be preached to one class of men as to every other class. I pray God the day may never come when we shall be found in our preaching talking about working classes, middle classes and upper classes. I know no difference between you; you are the same to me when I preach the gospel, whether you are kings and queens, or crossing sweepers; satin and cotton, broadcloth and fustian are alike to the gospel. If you are peers of the realm, we trim not our gospel to suit you, and if you are the basest of thieves, we do not exclude you from the voice of mercy. The gospel comes to men as sinners, all equally fallen in Adam, equally lost and ruined by sin. I have not one gospel for Her Majesty the Queen and another gospel for the beggar-woman. No, there is only one way of salvation, only one foundation, only one propitiation, only one gospel. Look to the cross of Christ and live. High was the brazen serpent lifted, and all that Moses said was, 'Look.' If a prince of the house of Judah was bitten, he was told to look; without looking his lion standard of costly emblazonry could not avail him; if some wretch in the camp was bitten, he must look, and the efficacy was the same for him as for the greatest of the host. Look! Look to Jesus. Believe in the Son of God and live! One brazen serpent for all the camp; one Christ for all ranks and conditions of men. What a blessing it would be if we were all enabled to trust Christ! My brethren, why not? He is worthy of the confidence of all. The Spirit of God is able to work faith in all. O poor sinner, look to him!

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#### QUESTION - [Why does the Bible speak so negatively about tax collectors?](#)

**ANSWER** - Probably in every culture, in every part of history, from the tax collectors of ancient Israel to the IRS agents of today, the tax man has received more than his share of scorn and contumely. The New Testament indicates that the occupation of "tax collector" (or "[publican](#)") was looked down upon by the general populace.

The [Pharisees](#) communicated their disdain for tax collectors in one of their early confrontations with Jesus. The Lord was eating a meal with "many tax collectors and sinners . . . , for there were many who followed him." When the Pharisees noticed this, "they asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?'" (Mark 2:15–16). A "sinner," to a Pharisee, was a Jew who did not follow the Law (plus the Pharisees' own rules). And a "tax collector" was—well, a *tax collector*.

Jesus used the commonly held opinion of tax collectors as an illustration of the final stage of church discipline: when a person is excommunicated, Jesus said to "treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (Matthew 18:17). In other words, the excommunicant is to be considered an outsider and a candidate for evangelism.

There are a few reasons for the low view of tax collectors in the New Testament era. First, no one likes to pay money to the government, especially when the government is an oppressive regime like the Roman Empire of the 1st century. Those who collected the taxes for such a government bore the brunt of much public displeasure.

Second, the tax collectors in the Bible were *Jews* who were working for the hated Romans. These individuals were seen as turncoats, traitors to their own countrymen. Rather than fighting the Roman oppressors, the publicans were helping them—and enriching themselves at the expense of their fellow Jews.

Third, it was common knowledge that the tax collectors cheated the people they collected from. By hook or by crook, they would collect more than required and keep the extra for themselves. Everyone just understood that was how it worked. The tax collector [Zacchaeus](#), in his confession to the Lord, mentioned his past dishonesty (Luke 19:8).

Fourth, because of their skimming off the top, the tax collectors were well-to-do. This further separated them from the lower classes, who resented the injustice of their having to support the publicans' lavish lifestyle. The tax collectors, ostracized as they were from society, formed their own [clique](#), further separating themselves from the rest of society.

Jesus taught that we should love our enemies. To emphasize the point, He said, "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?" (Matthew 5:46). The word *even* is significant. Jesus was telling the crowd they needed to rise above the level of publican behavior. If our love is only reciprocal, then we're no better than a tax collector! Such a comparison must have left its mark on Jesus' hearers.

Given the low esteem people had for tax collectors, it is noteworthy that Jesus spent so much time with them. The reason He was [eating that meal](#) in Mark 2 with "many tax collectors" is that He had just called Matthew, a tax collector, to be one of His twelve disciples. Matthew was throwing a feast because he wanted his circle of friends to meet the Lord. Many believed in Jesus (verse



15). Jesus responded to the Pharisees' indignation by stating His ministry purpose: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17).

The Pharisees saw tax collectors as enemies to be shunned. Jesus saw them as the spiritually sick to be healed. The Pharisees could offer nothing to the tax collectors except a list of rules. Jesus offered forgiveness of sins and the hope of a new life. No wonder the publicans liked to spend time with Jesus (Luke 15:1). And tax collectors like Matthew and Zacchaeus were transformed by the gospel and followed the Lord.

[John the Baptist's](#) message was that *all* need to repent, not just tax collectors and other obvious sinners. The Pharisees couldn't see their need and refused to be categorized with publicans. To the self-righteous, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him" (Matthew 21:31–32).

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### Robert Morgan - ... And Harlots - [From This Verse](#)

Eva J. Alexander was born to believing parents in Chennai, India, and born again at age 12 during a Billy Graham meeting. In 1963, she married R. D. Alexander, and the two took positions with the Indian government. Eva's job exposed her to the plight of women in her country, and she began speaking out about their status and suffering. For awhile, she became so socially active that her spiritual life suffered. Politics became more important than religion.

But the Lord sent a serious illness that brought her to her knees. "God, if you're real," she prayed, hovering near death in the hospital, "do not allow me to die. I will serve you." Returning home, Eva began reading her Bible again and two words in Matthew 21:31 tore through her mind like torpedoes—and harlots. Jesus wanted to bring harlots into His kingdom.

A week later, a nearby pastor told her of a prostitute who had run away from the brothels, and he asked Eva to provide a room for her. "I can't," said Eva. "You keep her." Eva had a husband and four children at home, including two teenage sons. But the Lord again brought Matthew 21:31 to mind, and Eva relented.

Her family was aghast: "What is this? You're turning our house into a brothel!" But their attitudes soon changed, and they accepted this ministry as coming from God. Other girls began showing up, and the Alexander home became a rehabilitation center. Police officers and prisons referred troubled women to Eva, and today up to 15 women live in the Alexander home at any one time. The Alexanders provide medical treatment, job training, and a strong gospel witness. Eva has started a home for the children of prostitutes where 60 children, age 12 months to 13 years, find refuge.

Her husband and children joined her work, and, spurred on by Matthew 21:31, they are bringing many harlots into the Kingdom. \*

Today's Suggested Reading Matthew 21:28–32

Jesus said unto them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you." Matthew 21:31

**Matthew 21:32 "For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him."**

KJV Matthew 21:32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

BGT Matthew 21:32 λθεν γ ρ ω ννης πρ ς μ ς ν δ δικαιοσ νης, κα ο κ πιστε σατε α τ , ο δ τελ ναι κα α π ρ ναι π στευσαν α τ · με ς δ δ ντες ο δ μετεμελ θητε στερον το πιστε σαι α τ .

NET Matthew 21:32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe. Although you saw this, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

CSB Matthew 21:32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you didn't believe him. Tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him, but you, when you saw it, didn't even change your minds then and believe him.

ESV Matthew 21:32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

NIV Matthew 21:32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

NLT Matthew 21:32 For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn't believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.

NRS Matthew 21:32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

NJB Matthew 21:32 For John came to you, showing the way of uprightness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.

NAB Matthew 21:32 When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

YLT Matthew 21:32 for John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye did not believe him, and the tax-gatherers and the harlots did believe him, and ye, having seen, repented not at last -- to believe him.

MIT Matthew 21:32 For John came to you championing the way of righteousness, but you did not trust him. On the other hand, tax-takers and prostitutes did believe him. Although you scrutinized him, you afterward did not have a change of heart to place confidence in him.

- **came:** Mt 3:1-8 Isa 35:8 Jer 6:16 Lu 3:8-13 2Pe 2:21
- **did not believe:** Mt 21:25 11:18 Lu 7:29,30 Joh 5:33-36 Ac 13:25-29
- **tax collectors and prostitutes:** Lu 7:37-50
- **Feel remorse:** Ps 81:11,12 Zec 7:11,12 Joh 5:37-40 2Ti 2:25 Heb 3:12 6:6-8 Rev 2:21

## THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THE MESSAGE OR THE TRANSFORMED LIVES

**For John came to you in the way** ([hodos](#)) **of righteousness** ([dikaiosune](#)) **and you did not believe** ([pisteuo](#) - aorist tense - active voice = decision of one's will, volitional choice) **him** - This is the answer the religious leaders refused to answer when Jesus posed His question to them in Mt 21:24-25+ - "The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?" Clearly John's message was from Heaven for he taught the **way of righteousness** and they refused to **believe** his message. John preached a righteous message and lived a righteous life.

Luke writes "When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But **the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected** ([atheteo](#) - aorist tense - active voice = decision of one's will, volitional choice) **God's purpose for themselves**, not having been baptized by John. (Luke 7:29-30+)

**but** - A dramatic term of contrast. Religious leaders rejected John's message but irreligious (so to speak) people received his message!

**The tax collectors** ([telones](#)) **and prostitutes** ([porne](#)) **did believe** ([pisteuo](#) - aorist tense) **him** - Jesus explains how these hated groups would be granted entrance into the Kingdom of God. It was by their belief in John's message to repent and bring forth fruit in their lives that would demonstrate their repentance was genuine.

**And you, seeing** (perceiving) **this** - MIT says "Although you scrutinized him!" The religious leaders had no excuse. They saw the misfits repent and believe. They saw living proof of the life giving Gospel and still refused to believe! They had absolutely no excuse! Matthew himself is a prime example of a hated tax collector whose life was radically transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ! But again these hypocrites broke the truism that *seeing is believing*, for it was not so with them! They saw and rejected what their eyes beheld! A hard heart is an amazing thing!

**Did not even feel remorse** ([metamelomai](#) - aorist tense, passive voice) **afterward so as to believe** ([pisteuo](#) - aorist tense) **him** - Here is crushing, condemning blow to these religious fakers. Jesus says they did not have **remorse** like the second son in the parable and like the tax collectors and prostitutes. The tragic result was they did not believe John's message of repentance and bring forth fruit in keeping with that repentance. In short they were spiritually dead, lost in time and in eternity (unless some later repented).

**John MacArthur** - In other words, they would not be convicted either by the truth of the message or its power to transform sinners. They had been exposed to the full light of the prophet of God and the even greater light of the Son of God, yet they refused to be enlightened. They had heard the message of the herald of the King and the message of the King Himself, yet they would not listen or believe. They had witnessed the power of John and the power of Christ, yet they would not be moved. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 291](#))

**Righteousness** (1343) **dikaosune** from **dikaos** = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense **dikaosune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm and in Biblical terms the "standard" is God and His perfect, holy character. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God. **Dikaosune** is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through Christ ([Click here](#) to read Pastor Ray Pritchard's interesting analysis of **righteousness** in the Gospel of Matthew).

**Hermann Cremer** writes that "**Righteousness** in the biblical sense is a condition of rightness the standard of which is God, which is estimated according to the divine standard, which shows itself in behavior conformable to God, and has to do above all things with its relation to God, and with the walk before Him. It is, and it is called dikaosune theou (righteousness of God) (Ro 3:21, 1:17), righteousness as it belongs to God, and is of value before Him, Godlike righteousness, see Ep 4:24; with this righteousness thus defined, the gospel (Ro 1:17) comes into the world of nations which had been wont to measure by a different standard. Righteousness in the Scripture sense is a thoroughly religious conception, designating the normal relation of men and their acts, etc., to God. Righteousness in the profane mind is a preponderantly a social virtue, only with a certain religious background. (Online [Biblico-theological lexicon of New Testament Greek page 184](#))

**DIKAIOSUNE IN THE GOSPELS**- Matt. 3:15; Matt. 5:6; Matt. 5:10; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 6:1; Matt. 6:33; Matt. 21:32; Lk. 1:75; Jn. 16:8; Jn. 16:10

Jesus Thy Blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head. ([Play](#))

**Believe** (4100) **pisteuo** from **pistis**; **pistos**; related studies [the faith](#), the [obedience of faith](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of. **Vincent** notes that **pisteuo** "means to persuade, to cause belief, to induce one to do something by persuading, and so runs into the meaning of to obey, properly as the result of persuasion. **Pisteuo** means to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence. To believe in with the implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted. Christ is the object of this type of faith that relies on His power and nearness to help, in addition to being convinced that His revelations or disclosures are true.

**PISTEUO IN THE GOSPELS** - Matt. 8:13; Matt. 9:28; Matt. 18:6; Matt. 21:22; Matt. 21:25; Matt. 21:32; Matt. 24:23; Matt. 24:26; Matt. 27:42; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 5:36; Mk. 9:23; Mk. 9:24; Mk. 9:42; Mk. 11:23; Mk. 11:24; Mk. 11:31; Mk. 13:21; Mk. 15:32; Mk. 16:13; Mk. 16:14; Mk. 16:16; Mk. 16:17; Lk. 1:20; Lk. 1:45; Lk. 8:12; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 8:50; Lk. 16:11; Lk. 20:5; Lk. 22:67; Lk. 24:25; Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 1:50; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 2:24; Jn. 3:12; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:21; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 4:41; Jn. 4:42; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:50; Jn. 4:53; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 5:44; Jn. 5:46; Jn. 5:47; Jn. 6:29; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:36; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:64; Jn. 6:69; Jn. 7:5; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 7:38; Jn. 7:39; Jn. 7:48; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:30; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 8:45; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:18; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 9:36; Jn. 9:38; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 10:26; Jn. 10:37; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 10:42; Jn. 11:15; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 11:26; Jn. 11:27; Jn. 11:40; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 11:45; Jn. 11:48; Jn. 12:11; Jn. 12:36; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 12:38; Jn. 12:39; Jn. 12:42; Jn. 12:44; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 13:19; Jn. 14:1; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:11; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 14:29; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 16:27; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 16:31; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:20; Jn. 17:21; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:29; Jn. 20:31

**Matthew 21:33** "**Listen** to another parable. There was a landowner who **PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey.**

- **Listen**: In this parable, in its primary sense, the householder denotes the Supreme Being; the family, the Jewish nation; the

vineyard, Jerusalem; the fence, the Divine protection; the wine-press, the law and sacrificial rites; the tower, the temple; and the husbandmen, the priests and doctors of the law. Mt 13:18 1Ki 22:19 Isa 1:10 Jer 19:3 Ho 4:1

- **There:** Ps 80:8-16 Song 8:11,12 Isa 5:1-4 Jer 2:21 Mk 12:1 Lu 20:9-18 Joh 15:1
- **landowner:** Mt 23:2 De 1:15-17 16:18 17:9-12 33:8-10 Mal 2:4-9
- **went:** Mt 25:14,15 Mk 13:34 Lu 19:12

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 5:1-7+ Let me sing now for my well-beloved A song of my beloved concerning His **vineyard** (Lxx = [ampelon](#)). My well-beloved had a **vineyard** (Lxx = [ampelon](#)) on a fertile hill. 2 He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it And also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones. 3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My **vineyard** (Lxx = [ampelon](#)). 4 "What more was there to do for My **vineyard** (Lxx = [ampelon](#)) that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones? 5 "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My **vineyard** (Lxx = [ampelon](#)): I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. 6 "I will lay it waste; It will not be pruned or hoed, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it." 7 **For the vineyard (Lxx = [ampelon](#)) of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel And the men of Judah His delightful plant.** Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

Jeremiah 2:21 (SPEAKING OF ISRAEL) **"Yet I planted you a choice vine,** A completely faithful seed. How then have you turned yourself before Me Into the degenerate shoots of a foreign vine?"

Psalms 80:8-16+ **You removed a vine from Egypt,** You drove out the nations and **planted it.** 9 You cleared the ground before it, And it took deep root and filled the land. 10 The mountains were covered with its shadow, And the cedars of God with its boughs. 11 It was sending out its branches to the sea And its shoots to the River. 12 Why have You broken down its hedges, So that all who pass that way pick its fruit? 13 A boar from the forest eats it away And whatever moves in the field feeds on it. 14 O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine, 15 Even the shoot which Your right hand has planted, And on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. 16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.

Luke 20:9+ And He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time.

Mark 12:1+ And He began to speak to them in parables: "A man PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT, AND DUG A VAT UNDER THE WINE PRESS AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey.

Israel Was Symbolized as a Vineyard in the Bible

### LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

**Listen** ([akouo aorist imperative](#)) **to another parable** ([parabole](#)) - Jesus uses the [aorist imperative](#) commanding their immediate and full attention to this second **parable** in a series of three. **Another** is [allos](#) signifying another parable of the same kind. The preceding parable of the two sons had been about judgment and this parable will also be about judgment. Both parables reflect judgment on the hearers because they had rejected Jesus.

**Charles Swindoll** comments "Jesus' sharp denouncement left the religious leaders reeling, stunned that He would publicly call them out and accuse them of faithlessness and disobedience. But Jesus wasn't finished with them yet. He followed the first jab with a second, taking a swing at them with a parable that outlines the big picture of God's offer of salvation (Mt 21:33-41)." (See [Insights on Matthew 16-28 - Page 161](#))

Parallel parables are found in Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12 (see above). The fact that this parable is recorded three times makes it one of the most important in the NT. The only other parables in all 3 synoptic gospels are the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the soils.

It is interesting that some have referred to this day (most take it as Tuesday, but as noted MacArthur thinks it is Wednesday) as "the Day of Antagonism."

Jesus often told parables to hide truth, but not in this case. The players in Jesus' parable can be readily discerned:

- The Owner of the Vineyard = God the Father
- The Vineyard = The nation of Israel
- Vine-growers = The religious rulers of Israel entrusted with leading Israel - chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, and the elders.
- Slaves = The prophets of God that were persecuted and killed.
- Son = The Lord Jesus

It should not surprise us to hear that liberal theologians deny that this passage was spoken by Jesus, claiming it was added by the early church. Why would they do this? Simply because while it is a story, it is also an incredibly accurate prophecy by Jesus not only of His death, but also of the destruction of Jerusalem. Liberals don't like predictive prophecy that comes true (as it always does!) because they know to accept it as literal truth means that there is a "Literal God" to Whom they will one day have to give an account! Amen!

**Grassmick** gives us some background to help set the parable in context, explaining that the Jews knew about this system of someone supervising the vineyard of a rich person - This parable reflects the social situation of first-century Palestine, especially Galilee. Wealthy foreign landlords owned large land estates which they leased to tenant farmers. The tenants agreed to cultivate the land and care for the vineyards when the landlords were away. A contract between them designated that a portion of the crop was to be paid as rent. At harvest time the owners sent agents to collect the rent. Inevitably tension arose between the absentee owners and the tenants. (See [The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**R. T. France:** The story of an absentee landowner reflects a familiar economic situation at the time; some of the chief priests and elders to whom Jesus is speaking would probably have owned land away from Jerusalem. The landowner must be a wealthy man, because a newly planted vineyard could not be expected to produce fruit for at least four years, during which he would have no return on his capital outlay. Once the vines began to fruit there would be an agreed proportion of the crop due to the owner, leaving the tenant to derive their living from the rest. The fault of the tenants in withholding the due produce (and in the violence perpetuated on the slaves) is massively compounded by their decision to murder the owner's son and so to attempt to take over the property. At this point the story has moved away from everyday reality, and, as often happens in parables (notably in 22:7), the intended symbolism has apparently invaded the story-line: the murder of the son represents the forthcoming execution of Jesus. (See [The Gospel of Matthew - Page 260](#))

**There was a landowner** ([oikodespotes](#)) **who PLANTED** ([phuteuo](#)) **A VINEYARD** ([ampelon](#)) **AND PUT A WALL** ([phragmos](#)) **AROUND** ([peritithemi](#)) **IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS** (pix below) **IN IT, AND BUILT** ([oikodomeo](#)) **A TOWER** (see pix above) - In this parable it is easy to see that the vineyard is a figure for Israel in the OT. Isaiah 5:7 says "For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel" The nation of Israel and its leaders are the tenants, the **vine-growers**. The leasing of land to tenant farmers was common in this period.

Ancient Winepress  
Click to enlarge  
(Source: Logos.com)

Israel is hilly and [vineyards](#) were planted on the hillsides which were terraced. They would surround the vineyard with a hedge or wall for protection. The vineyard would usually have a [winepress](#) ([picture and description of ancient wine press](#)) as well as a tower for protection.

**John Schultz:** The question is what this vineyard stands for. It does not represent all of creation, at least not initially. It is the mandate that God had particularly entrusted to the people of Israel, which, after the rejection of the Son, would be given to the Gentiles. In Mt 21:43, Jesus identifies it as "**the kingdom of God**." It represents God's revelation of Himself to mankind. Israel had been given the task of being the guardian of God's righteousness. God's intention had been that Israel would not keep this treasure to itself but that, by becoming a kingdom of priests, it would demonstrate this riches for the benefit of the whole world. Israel failed completely in the carrying out of this task, both as far as the keeping of the mandate and the testimony of God's righteousness. It used the fruits of the vineyard for its own consumption.

**Brooks** rightly emphasizes that "No attempt should be made, however, to identify the wall, the pit, or the tower as the law, the altar, and the temple, respectively, as did the medieval church in its excessive allegorical interpretations....In Isaiah the problem is a fruitless vineyard, i.e., a nation that failed to produce the fruits of righteousness. In the present parable the emphasis is on the wickedness (greed, dishonesty, violence, murder) of the tenants, who seem to represent the leaders of the nation." (Ibid)



**And rented it out to vine-growers ([georgos](#)) and went on a journey** ("for a long time" - Lk 20:9) - In other words the vineyard was rented out by the "absentee landlord," the owner who was not present. The ones who cultivated the vineyards were in effect tenant farmers who rented the owner's land, produced a crop and gave the owner his share of the proceeds when the crop was sold. A vine-grower was a "contract laborer" who was given the benefit of working the owner's land, which was a wonderful opportunity for those too poor to own their own land.

Who are the **vine-growers**? These are the religious leaders (cf "the chief priests and the scribes with the elders" who confronted Jesus in Lk 20:1<sup>+</sup>) These men are those who God had put in charge of caring for His vineyard, the nation of Israel, especially providing for their spiritual nourishment, in the true way of God. Notice that these leaders are never called "owners" but serve only as stewards (including all their previous leaders - kings, priests and prophets) who were given responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the people of Israel.

**C H Spurgeon** - In this parable a certain householder did all that could be done for his vineyard: it was well planted, and hedged round about, provided with a wine-press digged in the rock, and guarded by a tower built for the purpose. Even so the Jewish Church had been created, trained, guarded, and fully furnished by the Lord; "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant" (Isaiah 5:7). Everything was in good order for the production of fruit, so that the Lord was able to say, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isaiah 5:4.) The owner went into a far country and committed the estate to husbandmen who were to take care of it for him and yield to him a certain share of the produce as the rent. Thus the great Lord of Israel left the nation under the care of priests, and kings, and men of learning, who should have cultivated this heritage of Jehovah for him, and yielded up to him the fruit of this choice vineyard. God for a while seemed gone from his chosen people, for miracles had ceased; but this should have made the scribes and priests the more watchful, even as good servants are the more awake to guard the estate of their master when he is away. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Discussion of Vineyards in the Holy Land](#) with several nice black and white pictures

**Parable** (symbol) ([3850](#)) [parabole](#) from **para** = beside, near + **ballo** = throw, cast; English "parable") is literally a throwing beside or placing of one thing by the side of another (juxtaposition as of ships in battle in classic Greek). The metaphorical meaning is to place or lay something besides something else for the purpose of comparison. (Mt 24:32, Mk 13:28, Mk 3:23, Lk 14:7). An illustration (Mt 13:3). In Hebrews 9:9 the idea is of something (OT Tabernacle) that serves as a model or example pointing beyond itself for later realization and thus a type or a figure.

**John MacArthur** says **parabole** is "A spiritual or moral truth would often be expressed by laying it alongside, so to speak, a physical example that could be more easily understood. A common, observable object or practice was used to illustrate a subjective truth or principle. That which was well known was laid alongside that which was not known or understood in order to explain it. The known elucidated the unknown. The parable was a common form of Jewish teaching... Teaching through parables and other figurative means is effective because it helps make abstract truth more concrete, more interesting, easier to remember, and easier to apply to life. When a truth is externalized in the figures of a parable, the internalizing of moral and spiritual meaning is much easier. In the series of parables in chapter 13, Jesus uses such familiar figures as soil, seed, birds, thorns, rocks, sun, wheat, tares, mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, and a pearl. But in these particular parables themselves the truth is not made clear, because the basic story tells nothing but the literal account, without presenting the moral or spiritual truth. It was only to His disciples that Jesus explained what the soil, the seed, the thorns, and the other figures represent. And an unexplained parable was nothing but an impossible riddle, whose meaning could only be guessed at." (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

[Parable in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

[What is a parable? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Planted** ([5452](#)) (**phuteuo** from **phuton** = a plant from **phuo** = to generate, to bring forth, to be born) means to plant, to put into the ground in order to grow, to set. Phuteuō in the classical use could have both a literal sense, "to plant" vegetation of some sort, and a figurative sense, "to beget" or "to produce" (cf. Liddell-Scott). In its 11 New Testament occurrences phuteuō is predominantly used in the literal sense, e.g., in Matthew 15:13 Jesus spoke of a plant which had been planted. In all its other occurrences in the Synoptic Gospels and also 1 Corinthians 9:7 it is used literally. In 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 Paul used this word figuratively to describe his work as an evangelist. He had planted spiritual seed among the Corinthians.

**PHUTEUO - 11V** - Matt. 15:13; Matt. 21:33; Mk. 12:1; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 17:6; Lk. 17:28; Lk. 20:9; 1 Co. 3:6; 1 Co. 3:7; 1 Co. 3:8; 1 Co. 9:7

**PHUTEUO IN THE SEPTUAGINT** - Gen. 2:8; Gen. 9:20; Gen. 21:33; Deut. 16:21; Deut. 20:6; Deut. 28:30; Deut. 28:39; Jos. 24:13; Ps. 1:3; Ps. 80:15; Ps. 92:13; Ps. 94:9; Ps. 104:16; Ps. 107:37; Prov. 27:18; Eccl. 2:4; Eccl. 2:5; Eccl. 3:2; Eccl. 12:11; Isa. 5:2; Isa. 17:10; Isa. 17:11; Isa. 37:30; Isa. 40:24; Isa. 44:14; Isa. 65:22; Jer. 2:21; Jer. 12:2; Jer. 29:5; Jer. 29:28; Jer. 31:5; Jer. 32:41; Jer. 42:10; Jer. 45:4; Ezek. 19:10; Ezek. 19:13; Ezek. 28:26; Dan. 4:20; Amos 5:11; Amos 9:14

Gen. 2:8+ = The LORD God **planted** a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.;

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**Matthew Henry Concise - Mt 21:33-46.** This parable plainly sets forth the sin and ruin of the Jewish nation; and what is spoken to convict them, is spoken to caution all that enjoy the privileges of the outward church. As men treat God's people, they would treat Christ himself, if he were with them. How can we, if faithful to his cause, expect a favourable reception from a wicked world, or from ungodly professors of Christianity! And let us ask ourselves, whether we who have the vineyard and all its advantages, render fruits in due season, as a people, as a family, or as separate persons. Our Saviour, in his question, declares that the Lord of the vineyard will come, and when he comes he will surely destroy the wicked. The chief priests and the elders were the builders, and they would not admit his doctrine or laws; they threw him aside as a despised stone. But he who was rejected by the Jews, was embraced by the Gentiles. Christ knows who will bring forth gospel fruits in the use of gospel means. The unbelief of sinners will be their ruin. But God has many ways of restraining the remainders of wrath, as he has of making that which breaks out redound to his praise. May Christ become more and more precious to our souls, as the firm Foundation and Cornerstone of his church. May we be willing to follow him, though despised and hated for his sake.

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Vineyard?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Parable of the Vineyard appears in three of the gospels (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19), with Matthew's account being the most complete. However, there are additions in the others; hence, it is wise to study all three accounts so as to achieve the greatest understanding. To get the context of what is happening, we need to look at Matthew 21:18. Early in the morning, Jesus goes to the temple courts to teach (Mt 21:23). While He is teaching, the chief priest and elders confront Him, wanting to know by what authority He is teaching. Not allowing them to control the conversation, Jesus answers the question by first asking a question (Mt 21:24-26). They do not like His question nor His response to their answer; essentially, He has told them that they can't save face from their obvious attempt to cajole Him and, therefore, He is not obligated to answer their question (Mt 21:27). What Jesus told them is that John the Baptist and He received their authority from the same source. This exchange causes the leaders to become angry and puts them in opposition to Jesus. Jesus then further frustrates the priests by telling two parables: the first one is the Parable of the Two Sons, and the second is the Parable of the Vineyard, sometimes called the Parable of the Wicked Tenants.

The first parable Jesus teaches tells the priests that they have claimed to accept the message from God but they have failed to live up to it by being obedient. Outwardly, they are pious and appear to be people of God, but God knows the heart, and there they have failed miserably. The next parable (the Parable of the Vineyard) is like pouring salt on a wound. Just in case they didn't fully understand (which they did), Jesus gives a much clearer picture of what He means. Obviously, this further infuriates the priests, but it also gives the others who were present an opportunity to hear Jesus fully explain the implications of the disobedience of the Jewish people throughout the ages.

Background: There are 6 main characters in this parable:

- 1) the landowner—God,
- 2) the vineyard—Israel,
- 3) the tenants/farmers—the Jewish religious leadership,
- 4) the landowner's servants—the prophets who remained obedient and preached God's word to the people of Israel,
- 5) the son—Jesus, and
- 6) the other tenants—the Gentiles.

The imagery used is similar to Isaiah's parable of the vineyard (it would be prudent to study this also) found in Isaiah 5. The watchtower and the wall mentioned in Mt 21:33 are means of protecting the vineyard and the ripened grapes. The winepress is obviously for stamping out the juice of the grapes to make the wine. The farmer was apparently away at the time of harvest and had rented the vineyard to the tenants. This was customary of the times, and he could expect as much as half of the grapes as payment

by the tenants for use of his land.

**Explanation:** Mt 21:34-36 tell us the landowner sent his servants to collect his portion of the harvest and how they were cruelly rejected by the tenants; some were beaten, stoned, and even killed. Then he sent even more the second time and they received the same treatment. The servants sent represent the prophets that God had sent to His people/Israel and then were rejected and killed by the very people who were claiming to be of God and obedient to Him. Jeremiah was beaten (Jeremiah 26:7-11; 38:1-28), John the Baptist was killed (Matthew 14:1-12), and others were stoned (2 Chronicles 24:21). In this parable Jesus is not only reminding the religious establishment what they were like, but He was putting in their minds a question: how could they claim obedience as God's people and still reject His messengers? We don't know how many servants the owner sent, but that is not what is important; the theme is God's repeated appeal through His prophets to an unrepentant people. In the next verses (37-39), the situation becomes even more critical. The landowner sends his own son, believing that they will surely respect him. But the tenants see an opportunity here; they believe that if they kill the son they will then receive his inheritance. The law at the time provided that if there were no heirs then the property would pass to those in possession (possession is nine tenths of the law). This amounts to conspiracy to commit murder by the Jewish leadership, and it is prophetic in the sense that Jesus is now telling them what they are going to do to Him (see Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 28:16). After Jesus' death, Peter would make the same charges against the religious establishment (Acts 4:8-12). The tenants probably thought that the fight for the property was over, but it wasn't; the owner would now appear on the scene.

Jesus now (Mt 21:40-41) asks the question, what will the owner do to the evil tenants? What He is doing is forcing the religious leaders/priests to declare their own miserable fate: condemnation for their blatant disobedience. This is similar to the question that Nathan put to David (2 Samuel 12:1-7). Up to this point, Jesus has been dealing with the immediate situation of Israel and its past disobedience; now Jesus leaves open the question of what Israel's leadership is going to do with the Messiah, the Son of God, whom He refers to as the "chief cornerstone" (Mt 21:42). Cornerstones and capstones are used symbolically in Scripture and picture Christ as the main piece of the foundation of the church and the head of the church, respectively. Jesus is the beginning of and is foundational to the church, and He now stands over the church in His rightful position of honor, guiding the church to fulfill its divine destiny. This verse makes clear prophetically how Jesus will be rejected by the religious establishment and ultimately be crucified (see Psalm 118:22-23).

The key to understanding this parable and what it says about the religious leaders is found in Mt 21:43, where Jesus makes their lack of obedience personal. Jesus tells the leaders that because of their disobedience they will be left out of the kingdom of heaven (individually and as a people); that they have let their opportunity for the time being slip away to be given to the Gentiles (see Mt 21:41, "other tenants"). This will be more than they can tolerate, as we will see in Mt 21:45, 46. He is saying that there will be a new people of God made up of all peoples who will temporarily replace the Jews so that Jesus can establish His church. This will change the way God deals with man, from the old dispensation of the law to a new dispensation of God's grace. It will usher in a period of time where man will no longer understand forgiveness of sins as man's work through what he does or doesn't do or by the sacrifices of animals on the altar, but by the work of Christ on the cross. It will be a time where each individual can have a personal and saving relationship with the One and only God of the universe. The exciting part of the verse is the phrase "who will produce fruit"; this gives authority to the church to share the gospel of Christ to the lost of the world. Up to this time, the Jews felt that they had automatic membership in God's kingdom because of their relationship to Abraham; this is why they put so much emphasis on genealogies. But the new people of God would truly have what God wanted for Israel all along: a personal and holy relationship that would be honored through the spreading of God's word to all peoples (see Exodus 19:5-6).

Jesus continues the stone metaphor in verse 44 to show how a stone can be used to build something beautiful, such as His church, or it can be used to crush and destroy, depending on the situation. This could be likened to God's word: to some it is salvation, peace and comfort. To others it is foolish and disconcerting because of its ability to convict man of his sins (2 Timothy 3:16).

Mt 21:45, 46 give us three insights into the psyche of the chief priest of the religious establishment.

- 1) They are jealous and envious of Jesus' popularity with the common people. This encroaches on their authority and power to govern.
- 2) They have come to the realization that Jesus is talking about them. This hurts their pride and embarrasses them in front of the people.
- 3) They understood the analogy of the son and that Jesus was referring to Himself. This would be blasphemous to them, and they would now seek to kill Jesus.

From here the leaders would meet in secrecy to plot how they would get rid of Jesus. Why all the secrecy? The people thought of Jesus as a prophet from God; arresting Him could cause an uprising. An uprising would jeopardize the leaders' relationship with the Roman authorities, something that the Jews did not want at any cost.

**Application:** We apply this parable to our lives by asking two questions:

**First**, have you come to know Christ as your Lord and Savior, or have you rejected Him like the Jewish leadership did? The process is simple, as long as you are sincere in seeking a relationship with Christ. You need to recognize your sins, and then accept Christ as the only One who can save you from the penalty of your sins.

**Second**, if you are a believer, what have you done with Jesus? Are you like the bad tenants, rejecting His Word and living a life of disobedience? If you are, you need to study God's Word and pray for guidance (ED: AND [ESPECIALLY LEARNING TO DEPEND ON THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT](#) TO ENABLE YOUR OBEDIENT CHOICES!), seeking His will for your life and living out that will as best as you can, moment by moment, day by day.

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### **James Smith - THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN Matthew 21:33–41**

In this parable Christ rebukes the unfruitful profession of the rulers of His people. They had rejected the Cornerstone, as builders, and their work had come to naught. So the veil of their temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the kingdom of God was taken from them and given to another nation (the Gentiles, v. 43). Religious knowledge, enthusiasm, and scrupulous observances are all empty and lifeless when Jesus Christ is rejected or denied His proper place—a lamp without a light, a body without a spirit. We observe here—

I. Labour Expended. The householder himself was at all the expense of the “planting,” “hedging,” “digging,” and “building” (v. 33).

Think of what God had done for Israel as a nation. He dug them out of Egypt, planted them in a good land, and hedged them about with promises and privileges, yet it proved an empty vine. God, as the Householder, wrought all this work—there were none to help Him. Think of the labour expended by our Lord Jesus Christ, that we might bring forth fruit to the praise of His Name. Oh, what praying, suffering, groaning, sweating, dying, He gave Himself.

II. Privilege Enjoyed. “He let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country” (v. 33).

These husbandmen did not purchase the vineyard; through the grace of God it was let out to them. Israel was honoured, as being the tenant of divine wisdom and knowledge, but because of unfaithfulness they have been expelled. This privilege now belongs to all who are in Christ Jesus. While the Master is in the far country these priceless blessings are let out to us by the grace of God. We have not bought them; we do not deserve them; they are the gifts of God—the tokens of His infinite love.

III. Fruit Expected. “He sent his servants, that they might receive the fruits” (v. 34).

Although the Master is in the far country (Heaven) He is still mindful of His vineyard. In asking the fruits He is only asking His own. The vineyard was His. “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). The much labour of Christ for us should produce much fruit through us.

IV. Selfishness Exhibited.

“The husbandmen took his servants, and beat, and killed, and stoned them” (v. 35). There is here no sign of gratitude for great privileges bestowed; no concern about the Master's interests. The grace of God has been in vain to them. It is sad to find this same selfish spirit among those who profess to be the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are ready to take every earthly blessing and advantage God may give them, but they will yield Him nothing. They will even wear the Name of Christ for their own personal interests.

V. Forbearance Manifested. “He sent other servants, and last of all He sent His Son” (v. 36).

What longsuffering, what patience with insult and cruelty, what willingness to forgive, what reluctance to punish! What a hideous contrast between the selfish greed of man and the lovingkindness of God! “They will reverence My Son.” The appearance of His Son brought out the awful enmity of the human heart against God. Such is GRACE—giving His best gift to the least deserving.

VI. Rebellion Declared. “When they saw the Son they said, This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance” (v. 38).

“We will not have this Man to reign to reign over us.” “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15). So Jesus, as the Son of Sovereign Grace, is cast out, and the Father, as the Householder, is defied. We will reign as

gods without Him is still the language of many a highly-favoured but God-hating sinner. Yet, O the depth of the mystery, that through the death of the Son we may indeed seize on His inheritance. Heirs of God.

VII. Destruction Assured. "He will miserably destroy those wicked men" (v. 41).

Privilege may exalt to the gate of Heaven, but if neglected and abused will crush into the depths of hell. These 1880 years' wanderings of the Jews on the face of the earth, without a king and without a country, is a divine and solemn witness and warning that God will judge sin. When the Lord Himself appears to reckon with the husbandmen it will be a time of dreadful awakening to those who have been in the vineyard only for their own selfish ends. Carefully note that the Householder asked for the fruits before He came. His coming was the time of judgment for His servants. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in His body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10)

**Matthew 21:34 "When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce."**

- **he sent:** 2Ki 17:13,14-23 2Ch 36:15,16 Ne 9:29,30 Jer 25:3-7 35:15 Zec 1:3-6 7:9-13 Mk 12:2-5 Lu 20:10-19
- **that:** Song 8:11,12 Isa 5:4

#### Related Passages:

Luke 20:10+ "At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him some of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

Mark 12:2+ "At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers.

### LANDOWNER SENDS SLAVES FOR HARVEST

**When the harvest ([karpos](#)) time ([kairos](#)) approached, he sent ([apostello](#)) his slaves ([doulos](#)) to the vine-growers to receive his produce** (Lit "to collect his fruits") - The **vine-growers** would then tend the grapes and give a certain percentage of the product to the owner (generally 25–30%). The **slaves** represent the prophets God sent to the nation, who were mistreated and rejected.

**THOUGHT** - [Kairos](#) is the same word Paul uses in Ephesians 5:16 calling on all of us "vine-growers" to Redeem the Time (see [youtube video](#)).

**C H Spurgeon** - The householder waited till near the full time in which he could expect a return. The time of the fruit drew near; and as the husbandmen sent him none of the produce of the vineyard, he sent his servants to receive the fruits of it, and bring them to him. These servants, as the lord's representatives, ought to have been received with due honor; but they were not. The leaders of the Jewish nation for a long time rendered to the Lord no homage, love, or service. Prophets were sent of God to Israel, but their message was refused by the rulers of the people. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Time** ([2540](#)) ([kairos](#)) means a point of time or period of time, time, period, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology. It means a moment or period as especially appropriate the right, proper, favorable time (at the right time). A season. Kairos describes something that lasts only for a season, for a specific period of time.

**Matthew 21:35 "The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third."**

- Mt 5:12 23:31-37 1Ki 18:4,13 19:2,10 22:24 2Ch 16:10 24:21,22 2Ch 36:15,16 Ne 9:26 Jer 2:30 25:3-7 26:21-24 Lu 13:33,34 Ac 7:52 1Th 2:15,16 Heb 11:36,37 Rev 6:9

#### Related Passages:

Luke 20:10-13+ "At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him some of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 "And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. 12 "And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out.



Mark 12:2-12+ "At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. 3 "They took him, and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 "Again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. 5 "And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some and killing others.

## VINE-GROWERS PERSECUTE AND KILL HIS SLAVES

**The vine-growers took his slaves ([doulos](#)) and beat ([dero](#)) one, and killed ([apokteino](#)) another, and stoned ([lithoboleo](#)) a third -** The tenants or vine-growers mistreating the owner's slaves pictures the nation's rejection of the prophets and their message. **Beat** refers to a severe beating or flogging. Mark and Luke omit the verb **stoned**."

**John MacArthur** adds that "From Mark's account we learn that in Jesus' telling of this story, 3 different slaves came individually. The tenants "beat" the first one, "wounded" the second, and "killed" the third (Mk 12:2-5). This corresponds to the Jewish rulers' treatment of many of the OT prophets (1Ki 22:24; 2Ch 24:20, 21; 36:15, 16; Ne 9:26; Jer 2:30).

**C H Spurgeon** - The husbandman, the persons in charge and authority, kings, priests, and teachers; these united in doing evil to the owner's servants. They were not themselves his "servants"; they deserved not so honorable a title. Beating, killing, and stoning, are put for various forms of maltreatment, which the Lord's prophets received at the hands of Israel's husbandmen, the religious rulers of the nation. Those to whom the vineyard was leased were traitors to the chief landlord, and did violence to his messengers; for in heart they desired to keep the vineyard to themselves. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Beat** (beating, flogged, receive lashes, strike) ([1194](#))([dero](#)) literally meant to remove the skin (flay = strip off skin) and in the NT is used to depict the action of whipping, beating, thrashing or scourging in a manner calculated to take off the skin and was used to describe **beating** of Jesus (Lk 22:63+). Jesus warned His disciples they would be flogged (Mk 13:9+) and they were (Acts 5:40)! **Dero** can refer to striking someone on the face or the body (John 18:23; 2 Cor. 11:20) or to a total physical beatdown (Acts 5:40; 16:37; 22:19).

**Stoned** ([3036](#))([lithoboleo](#) from [lithos](#) - stone + [ballo](#) - cast) means to pelt with stones. Throw stones at (Mt 21:35). Stone (to death) (Mt 23:37; Lk 13:34; Acts 7:58) The conspirators against Alexander are stoned after the trial by those present. In the Septuagint it is the usual term for execution by stoning (Deuteronomy 13:10). In Iconium both the Jews and the Gentiles sought to kill Paul and Barnabas by stoning (Acts 14:5).

**LITHOBOLEO** - 7V - Matt. 21:35; Matt. 23:37; Lk. 13:34; Acts 7:58; Acts 7:59; Acts 14:5; Heb. 12:20

**LITHOBOLEO IN SEPTUAGINT** - Exod. 8:26; Exod. 19:13; Exod. 21:28; Exod. 21:29; Exod. 21:32; Lev. 20:2; Lev. 20:27; Lev. 24:14; Lev. 24:16; Lev. 24:23; Num. 15:35; Num. 15:36; Deut. 13:10; Deut. 17:5; Deut. 21:21; Deut. 22:21; Deut. 22:24; Jos. 7:25; 1 Sam. 30:6; 1 Ki. 12:18; 1 Ki. 21:10; 1 Ki. 21:13; 1 Ki. 21:14; 2 Chr. 10:18; 2 Chr. 24:21; Ezek. 16:40; Ezek. 23:47

**Matthew 21:36 "Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them.**

### Related Passages:

Luke 20:11-13+ 11"And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. 12 "And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out.

Mark 12:2-12+ "At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. 3 "They took him, and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4"Again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. 5 "And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some and killing others.

## BEATING AND KILLING THE SECOND GROUP

**Again he sent another group of slaves ([doulos](#)) larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them-** Another is

[allos](#) thus another group of the same kind. They beat, killed and stoned the second group. Most commentators agree these are references to persecution of the prophets God had sent to Israel.

**Van Parunak:** Throughout the OT, the rulers of the people abused the prophets. Jezebel and the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18:4, 13) Ahab and Micaiah (1 Kings 22) Joash and Zechariah (2 Chr 24:20-22) Jehoiakim and Jeremiah (Jer 26:21)

**C H Spurgeon** - The lord of the vineyard was patient, and gave them further opportunities to mend their ways: Again, he sent other servants. Failure to bring back the fruit was not the fault of the first messengers, for other servants were rejected even as they had been. The householder was very anxious to win the husbandmen to a better state of mind, for he increased the number of his representatives, sending more than the first, trusting that the evil men would yield to repeated calls. No good came of this effort of kindness; for the badly-disposed husbandmen only continued their murderous cruelty: they did unto them likewise. It was evidently a bad case. The Jewish people would not hearken to the voices of the Lord's servants, and their rulers not them the example of persecuting the men whom God had sent to them. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:37 "But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'**

NAU Matthew 21:37 "But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

KJV Matthew 21:37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

BGT Matthew 21:37 στερον δ π στειλεν πρ ς α το ς τ ν υ ν α το λ γων· ντραπ σονται τ ν υ ν μου.

NET Matthew 21:37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

CSB Matthew 21:37 Finally, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

ESV Matthew 21:37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

NIV Matthew 21:37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

NLT Matthew 21:37 "Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking, 'Surely they will respect my son.'

- **But afterward:** Mt 3:17 Mk 12:6 Lu 20:13 Joh 1:18,34 3:16,35,36 Heb 1:1,2
- **They:** Isa 5:4 Jer 36:3 Zep 3:7

#### Related Passages:

Luke 20:13+ "The owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.'

Mark 12:6+ ""He had one more to send, a **beloved** ([agapao](#)) **son**; he sent him last of all to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

### LANDOWNER FINALLY SENDS HIS SON

**But afterward** (most versions have "finally") **he sent** ([apostello](#)) **his** (Mk 12:6 adds "beloved") **son to them, saying, 'They will respect** ([entrepo](#)) **my son** - The landowner's decision to send his son clearly represents God sending His Son Jesus.

**William Hendriksen** on **afterward** or finally - The word "finally" is full of intense emotion and pathos. The owner has a son, a beloved son, his only child (see Mark 12:6). Besides that son there is no longer anyone else he can send. That son is his one and all. He is all there is left, the owner's last word. So he sent his son, thinking, "They will be ashamed of hurting my son. They will respect him." He spared not his own son! But what happens? When these wicked tenants see his son approaching they begin to plot. They enter into a consultation with each other. Accordingly, what they are going to do to him is not matter of impulse. On the contrary, it is "malice of aforethought," the result of wicked deliberation, of corrupt, selfish scheming. It is premeditated murder. They reason as follows: "This is the heir. When we kill him there will be no other heir to worry about. So the inheritance which he would have obtained will be ours." In their sinister folly they forget that the owner, the son's father, is still alive, and will certainly wreak vengeance. How blatantly foolish is sin! How absurd! "He who dwells in the heavens will laugh. The Lord will hold them in derision" (Ps. 2:4). (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew page 782](#))

**C H Spurgeon** -The sending of his son was the householder's last resort. Luke represents him as saying, "What shall I do?" He might have resolved at once to punish the evil-doers; but his action proved that mercy had triumphed over wrath: Last of all he sent

unto them his son. The sending of Jesus to Jerusalem was God's ultimatum. If he should be rejected, judgment must fall upon the guilty, city. It seemed impossible that his mission could fail. In sending his beloved Son, the Father seemed to say, "Surely, 'they will reverence my son.' Can they go the length of doing despite to the Heir of all things? Will not his own beauty and majesty overawe them? Heaven adores him; hell trembles at him; surely, they will reverence my Son." ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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### Vance Havner - God Sent His Son

Last of all he sent unto them his Son. Matthew 21:37.

In all the confusion and commercialization of Christmas these days we are more than likely to lose Christ. Let us never forget that God sent not merely a prophet, a philosopher, a leader, to meet the world's need. He gave His only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16). Like the man in the parable, He said, "I will send my beloved Son" (Lk. 20:13). He spared not His own Son (Rom. 8:32).

A little boy accustomed to seeing service stars in windows during the war exclaimed as he watched the evening star at sunset, "God must have a son in the war!" The story has been misapplied, but in the age-old struggle with sin God truly gave His Son.

Remember at Christmas that the Gospel is not that Jesus came or that He lived or that He taught. He could have done all that, but if He had returned to the Father some other way than by Calvary and the open tomb, we would still be in our sins.

Thank God He was born. But He was born to die and live again, that we might live forever.

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### The Parable of the Tenants - John Stott [Through the Year With John Stott: Daily Reflections from ... - Page 34](#)

LAST OF ALL, HE SENT HIS SON TO THEM. "THEY WILL RESPECT MY SON," HE SAID. BUT... THEY... KILLED HIM. Matthew 21:37-39

As the final week progressed, the authorities' hostility to Jesus grew, and the themes of confrontation and judgment clarified. A striking example of this is the so-called parable of the tenants that, however, is an allegory, not a parable.

The landowner who planted a vineyard and provided it with a wall, a winepress, and a watchtower is evidently God himself, whose vineyard is Israel as in Isaiah 5. He did everything within his power to make his people fruitful in good works. The tenant farmers, to whom the owner rented his vineyard, are the religious leaders of Israel. In due course, when the vintage was ripe, the owner sent his servants (the prophets) to collect the fruit, but the tenants seized, beat, stoned, and killed them. So the owner sent more servants, but they were ill-treated in the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son," he said to himself. Instead, the tenants killed him.

In conclusion, Jesus asked his hearers a straight question, which compelled them to make a moral judgment against themselves, since by their answer they condemned themselves. Indeed, Matthew explicitly says so: "When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them" (Matt. 21:45). Here is Jesus' question: "What will he [the landowner] do to those tenants?" (v. 40). They replied, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end... and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop" (v. 41).

"Therefore I tell you," Jesus said, "the kingdom of God will be taken away from you [Israel] and given to a people [the Gentiles] who will produce its fruit" (v. 43).

**Matthew 21:38 "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'**

BGT Matthew 21:38 ο ὁ γεωργὸς ὁ ντὲς τ ν υ ν ε πον ν αὐτο ς· ο τ ς σ τιν κληρον μο ς· δε τε ποκτε νωμεν α τ ν κα σχ μεν τ ν κληρονομ αν α το ,

NET Matthew 21:38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and get his inheritance!'

CSB Matthew 21:38 "But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance! '

ESV Matthew 21:38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.'

NIV Matthew 21:38 "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.'

NLT Matthew 21:38 "But when the tenant farmers saw his son coming, they said to one another, 'Here comes the heir to this estate. Come on, let's kill him and get the estate for ourselves!'

- **This:** Mt 2:13-16 26:3,4 27:1,2 Ge 37:18-20 Ps 2:2-8 Mk 12:7,8 Lu 20:14 Joh 11:47-53 Ac 4:27,28 5:24-28

#### Related Passages:

Luke 20:14+ "But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.'

Mark 12:7-8+ "But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' 8 "They took him, and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.

### SON RECOGNIZED AS HEIR AND KILLED

**But when** - Tragic term of contrast!

**The vine-growers ([georgos](#)) saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir([Kleronomos](#)); come, let us kill ([apokteino](#)) him and seize his inheritance ([kleronomia](#))** - While this is clearly a parable, this sentence could not have been clearer as to what the religious leaders planned to do to the Son of God!

This is a fascinating statement. Why do I say that? If we can interpret this aspect of the parable literally, Jesus says they knew the beloved son was "the heir."

**Wuest** agrees writing "The Sanhedrin recognized our Lord for what He was, the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. The Lord had come to claim the vineyard, Israel, for Himself. He had received friendly recognition from the people. This had aroused the jealousy of their spiritual leaders. They tried in desperation to recover their waning power over the people by giving Him over to the Gentiles for crucifixion." ([Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - Things turned not out as a loving heart might have hoped. Evil worked itself to its consummation. When the husbandmen saw the son; that is to say, as soon as the chief priests and Pharisees perceived that the true Messiah was come, they said among themselves what they dared not say openly. The very sight of the heir of all things fired them with malice. In their hearts they hated Jesus, because they knew that he really was the Messiah. They feared that he would dismiss them, and assume possession of his own inheritance, and therefore they would make an end of him: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him ." Once get him out of the way, they hoped to keep the nation in their own hands, and use it for their own purposes: therefore they inwardly said, "Let us seize on his inheritance. " They knew that he was "the heir", and that it was "his inheritance"; but their knowledge did not prevent them from seeking to snatch the vineyard away from its rightful owner. Our Lord pictured to the life what was passing in the minds of the proud ecclesiastics around him, and he did not hesitate to do this to their faces. No names were mentioned, but this was personal preaching of the best kind. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:39 "They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.**

BGT Matthew 21:39 κα λαβ ντες α τ ν ξ βαλον ξω το μπελ νος κα π κτειναν.

NET Matthew 21:39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

CSB Matthew 21:39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

ESV Matthew 21:39 And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

NIV Matthew 21:39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

NLT Matthew 21:39 So they grabbed him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and murdered him.

- **took him:** Mt 26:50,57 Mk 14:46-53 Lu 22:52-54 Joh 18:12,24 Ac 2:23 4:25-27
- **cast:** Heb 13:11-13
- **slew:** Ac 2:23 3:14,15 4:10 5:30 7:52 Jas 5:6

## Related Passages:

Matthew 26:50; 57 And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then **they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him**. (26:57) Those who **had seized Jesus** led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.

Mark 14:46-53 **They laid hands on Him and seized Him**. 47 But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. 48 And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as you would against a robber? 49 "Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures." 50 And they all left Him and fled. 51 A young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they \*seized him. 52 But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked. 53 They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes \*gathered together.

Luke 22:52-54 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? 53 "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours." 54 **Having arrested Him, they led Him away** and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.

Luke 20:14-15+ "But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.' 15 "So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"

Mark 12:7-8+ "But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' 8 "They took him, and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.

## THEY CAST HIM OUT AND KILLED HIM

**They took ([lambano](#)) him, and threw him out ([ekbállō](#)) of the vineyard ([ampelon](#)) and killed ([apokteino](#)) him** - If you were in the audience the day Jesus spoke this parable, you would have been shocked at this turn of events! This is designed to make the audience feel outrage against those tenant farmers. Throwing the heir out of the vineyard pictures Jesus' death outside of the walls of the Jerusalem.

Mark 12:7+ adds "But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' - This is a fascinating statement. Why do I say that? If we can interpret this aspect of the parable literally, Jesus says they knew the beloved son was "the heir."

**Wuest** agrees writing "The Sanhedrin recognized our Lord for what He was, the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. The Lord had come to claim the vineyard, Israel, for Himself. He had received friendly recognition from the people. This had aroused the jealousy of their spiritual leaders. They tried in desperation to recover their waning power over the people by giving Him over to the Gentiles for crucifixion." ([Mark in the Greek New Testament for the English reader](#))

**John MacArthur** agrees with the preceding comments adding that "Jesus' whole life was marked with endless evidences that He was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah. It was unmistakably clear. And the vine-growers say, "**This is the heir**." What an indictment. "**This is the heir**." They knew what His claims were. They knew He substantiated them by power over disease, power over death, power over demons. They knew His miracle power. They knew there was no explanation for Him other than that He was divine. **Why didn't they believe?** Listen to John 12:42. "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." It never was a question of evidences. Never. They even say, "We know that You speak the true words of God." They never argued about His miracles. They never denied one miracle. It just was not acceptable to them to believe in Him because they loved their own religion and the praise that it brought them more than they loved God. It was not a head issue, it was a heart issue. He is the Messiah. He is the only and beloved Son of God. ([Sermon](#))

**Cole** adds that "It was not through their failure to recognize the Son that they killed him; that would have been pardonable. It was, as in the parable, precisely because they recognized Him for who he was!...We reject the claims of Christ not because we *misunderstand* them, but because *we understand them only too well*, in spite of all our protestations to the contrary. (See [The Gospel According to Mark](#):)

**D. A. Carson:** Elsewhere [Matthew] shows (Mt 23:37) their fundamental unwillingness to come to terms with Jesus' identity and



claims because they did not want to bow to his authority. True, their attitude was not, according to the synoptic record, "This is the Messiah; come, let us kill him"; yet, in the light of the Scriptures, their rejection of him was no less culpable than if it had been that. Therefore, though all the parable's details may not be pressed, rejection of the son (Mt 23:39) by the leaders is the final straw that brings divine wrath on them. (See [Matthew](#))

**They did not kill Him because they thought He was a counterfeit Messiah but because they knew He was the Messiah** Does this not blow your mind! What it demonstrates is the depth of depravity of the human heart that rejects every offer of grace from God because it does not want to submit to the authority of the "**Owner**" but wants the "**Vineyard**" for itself! Are not these evil **vine-growers** in so many ways a picture of all of us before we were saved by grace through faith, for we were all "formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds" (Col 1:21+), "we were enemies" before "we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." (Ro 5:10+)! And yet in spite of this rejection "of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience" (Ro 2:4+), what does God do? "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Ro 5:8+) We can only sing out John Newton's great words "[Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see!](#)"

**Spurgeon** - They **caught** him in the garden of Gethsemane; they **cast** him out in their Council in the hall of Caiaphas, and when he was led without the gate of Jerusalem; they **slew** him at Calvary.

The writer of Hebrews describes the throwing of the Son outside of "the vineyard" writing "For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are **burned outside the camp**. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate (OF THE HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM). 13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. (Heb 13:11-13+) ([see excellent diagram of proposed site of Golgotha outside the city gates](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - The Lord Jesus becomes prophetic, as by the parable he foretells the success of their malice. The husbandmen were hasty in carrying out their wicked plot. No sooner said than done. Three acts were in that drama, and they followed quickly upon each other. We will drop the figures, and unveil the facts. They caught him in the garden of Gethsemane; they cast him out in their Council in the hall of Caiaphas, and when he was led without the gate of Jerusalem; they slew him at Calvary; for theirs was the crime, though the Romans did the deed. Thus the Heir was slain, but the murderers did not long retain the vineyard; swift justice overtook them. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:40 "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?"**

BGT Matthew 21:40 τὰν οὖν λαὸν κρινὸς τὸ μπελνός, τ ποίσει τοὺς γεωργοὺς κενοίς;

NET Matthew 21:40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

CSB Matthew 21:40 Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers?"

ESV Matthew 21:40 When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

NIV Matthew 21:40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

NLT Matthew 21:40 "When the owner of the vineyard returns," Jesus asked, "what do you think he will do to those farmers?"

- **what will he do:** Mk 12:9 Lu 20:15,16 Heb 10:29

#### Related Passages:

Luke 20:15+ "So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

Mark 12:9+ "What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others.

## JESUS POSES THE QUESTION

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. And what a conclusion it would be!

When the owner of the vineyard ([ampelon](#)) comes, what will he do to those vine-growers ([georgos](#))? - One can picture the religious leaders as "all ears" upon hearing this question addressed specifically to them.

**MacArthur** explains that "In typical rabbinical fashion, Jesus led His hearers to finish the story themselves, asking, **What will he do to those vine-growers?**" The chief priests and elders readily replied with moral indignation, **"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons."** They no doubt were highly pleased with this unusual opportunity to parade their self-righteousness before Jesus. They rightly assessed the proper ending of the parable, that the irate owner would first severely punish the wicked growers and then replace them with others who were reliable. They were completely unaware that, as they fed their pride on Jesus' baited question, they sprang the trap of their own condemnation." (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - Jesus puts the matter before them. Out of their own mouths shall the verdict proceed. There is a time when the lord of the vineyard cometh. To those chief priests that hour was drawing very near: the question for them to think of was, **"What will he do unto those husbandmen?"** As a class, the religious leaders of the Jews were guilty of the blood of a long line of prophets, and they were about to crown their long career of crime by the murder of the Son of God himself: in the destruction of Jerusalem the God of heaven visited them, and dealt out just punishment to them. The siege of the city and the massacre of the inhabitants was a terrible avenging of the innocent blood which the people and their rulers had shed. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:41 They \*said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons."**

KJV Matthew 21:41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

BGT Matthew 21:41 λ γουσιν α τ · κακο ς κακ ς πολ σει α το ς κα τ ν μπελ να κδ σετ αι λλοι ς γεωργο ς, ο τινε ς ποδ σου σιν α τ το ς καρπο ς ν το ς καιρο ς α τ ν.

NET Matthew 21:41 They said to him, "He will utterly destroy those evil men! Then he will lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his portion at the harvest."

CSB Matthew 21:41 "He will completely destroy those terrible men," they told Him, "and lease his vineyard to other farmers who will give him his produce at the harvest."

ESV Matthew 21:41 They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

NIV Matthew 21:41 "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

NLT Matthew 21:41 The religious leaders replied, "He will put the wicked men to a horrible death and lease the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the crop after each harvest."

NRS Matthew 21:41 They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

NJB Matthew 21:41 They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him at the proper time.'

NAB Matthew 21:41 They answered him, "He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times."

YLT Matthew 21:41 They say to him, 'Evil men -- he will evilly destroy them, and the vineyard will give out to other husbandmen, who will give back to him the fruits in their seasons.'

MIT Matthew 21:41 They answered him, "He will exterminate those extremely evil men, and he will lease the vineyard to other tenant farmers who will turn over to him the produce at the appropriate times."

- **He will bring those wretches** Mt 3:12 22:6,7 23:35-38 24:21,22 Lev 26:14-46 De 28:59-68 Ps 2:4,5,9 Isa 5:5-7 Da 9:26 Zec 11:8-10 12:12 13:8 14:2,3 Mal 4:1-6 Lu 17:32-37 19:41-44 21:22-24 1Th 2:16 Heb 2:3 12:25
- **and will rent out the vineyard** Mt 21:43 8:11 Isa 49:5-7 65:15 66:19-21 Lu 13:28,29 14:23,24 21:24 Ac 13:46-48 15:7 18:6 28:8 Ro 9:1-11:36 15:9-18

## Related Passages:

Luke 20:16+ "He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!"

Mark 12:9+ "What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others.

## SELF CONDEMNATION OF THEMSELVES

**They \*said** ([historical present tense](#)) **to Him** - I take the "**they**" here as the corrupt religious leaders. Our Lord causes them to pass the sentence of destruction upon themselves, a destruction which had its first installment about forty years later as Judaism as it had been practiced in the Temple was destroyed by the Roman armies.

**Spurgeon** adds "in the destruction of Jerusalem the God of heaven visited them, and dealt out just punishment to them. The siege of the city and the massacre of the inhabitants was a terrible avenging of the innocent blood which the people and their rulers had shed. "

**"He will bring those wretches** ([kakos](#)) **to a wretched end** ([apollumi](#)) - The chief priests and pharisees do not yet understand what they are saying, for here they call down God's judgment upon themselves (cf David's reaction to Nathan's parable - 2Sa 12:1-15+). The word for **end** ([apollumi](#)) does not speak of annihilation but of one whose life is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose. The end would indeed be wretched for these religious men would "be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 8:12+, cf Mt 13:42, 50+) forever tormented in the [Lake of fire](#).

**ESV Study Bible** agrees noting that "In a preliminary sense this (DESTRUCTION) happened during the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70, but in a fuller sense it refers to the final judgment." (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**Daniel Doriani:** The NIV captures a play on words in the Greek, which roughly reads "bad ones he will badly destroy." So Jesus now says what he previously showed when he closed the temple and he cursed the fig tree: judgment is coming.

**And will rent out the vineyard** ([ampelon](#)) **to other** ([allos](#) not [heteros](#) - see notes below) **vine-growers** ([georgos](#)) **who will pay** ([apodidomi](#)) **him the proceeds** ([karpos](#) - fruit) **at the proper seasons** ([kairos](#)) They fall into the trap laid by the parable and condemn themselves!

Who are the **other vine-growers**? Most commentaries say they are the Gentiles which sounds reasonable considering the fact that the church is now predominantly Gentile. But as discussed below by John MacArthur, one should not overlook that the first individuals who received charge over God's "Gospel seed" were all Jewish - 12 Jewish apostles and then one additional Jewish apostle Paul. It was through their ministry that the Gospel of the Kingdom was spread throughout the known world. So MacArthur makes an interesting point that the "others" may not be Gentiles as normally interpreted but actually be the believing Jewish apostles who replace the evil "vine-growers," the unbelieving Jewish religious leaders.

**John MacArthur** on the **other vine-growers** writes "It is not just a simple shift from Jew to Gentile, although obviously the people of God in the past were predominantly Jewish and now are predominantly Gentile. It is a shift in leadership. That's what our Lord is talking about. And of all people, the new leadership are the despised apostles and disciples of Jesus."

**MacArthur** devotes almost an entire sermon to explaining who the "**others**" are and if you are interested in a more detailed discussion read or listen to [The Murder of God's Son - A Prophetic Parable-Part 2](#) It is certainly food for thought and something I have never heretofore considered. It is notable that others is not [heteros](#) (different kind which would favor others as Gentiles) but [allos](#) (others of the same kind which would favor Jews), which does support MacArthur's premise the **other vine-growers** are of the same kind are also Jews. And of course the early church was almost entirely Jewish at its inception.

**C H Spurgeon** - Their reply was probably made complete, and full of details, that they might hide their own shame by a parade of justice in a case which they would have men think was no concern of theirs. In very deed, they pronounced upon themselves the sentence of being wicked men , to be miserably destroyed , and to have their offices given to better men: "he will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen ." They could not or would not give an opinion as to the mission of John the Baptist; but it seems that they could form a judgment as to themselves. The j Lord's vineyard passed over to other a husbandmen; and the apostles and the first preachers of the gospel were found faithful to their trust. Just now there are many professed ministers of Christ who are quitting the truth which he has committed to his stewards, as a sacred trust, and setting up

a doctrine of their own. Oh, that the Lord may raise up a race of men "who shall render him the fruits in their seasons !" The hall-mark of a faithful minister is his giving to God all the glory of any work that he is enabled to do. That which does not magnify the Lord will not bless men. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**End** (perish, lose, lost) ([622](#)) **apollumi** from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy <> root of **apollyon** [[Re 9:11](#)] = destroyer) means to destroy utterly but not to cause one to cease to exist. **Apollumi** as it relates to men, is not the loss of being per se, but is more the loss of well-being. It means to ruin so that the person (or thing) ruined can no longer serve the use for which he (it) was designed. To render useless. The gospel promises everlasting life for the one who believes. The failure to possess this life will result in utter ruin and eternal uselessness (but not a cessation of existence).

**Detzler** writes that "In early Greek writings the word **apollumi** spoke of eternal loss or annihilation, which reflected the Greek concept of the afterlife. Later the word came to mean "violent injury" or "destruction." Finally in the writings of Plato it is mentioned: "Evil is everything that corrupts [apollyon] and destroys, and good is that which preserves and strengthens" (Republic). Among the destructive forces which Plato mentioned were sickness for the body, rot for wood, and rust in iron (BORROW [New Testament words in today's language](#) PAGE 116)

**Apollumi** is the term Jesus used to speak of those who are thrown into hell (Mt 10:28<sup>+</sup>). As He makes clear elsewhere, hell is not a place or state of nothingness or unconscious existence, as is the Hindu Nirvana but is the place of everlasting torment, the place of eternal death, where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 13:42, 50+).

**John MacArthur** writes that "**Apollumi** (destroy) refers to utter devastation. But as the noted Greek scholar W. E. Vine explains, "The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being" (An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words [Westwood, N.J.: Revel, 1940]). The term is often used in the New Testament to indicate eternal damnation (see, e.g., Mt 10:28; Lk 13:3; Jn 3:16; Ro. 2:12), which applies to unbelievers. But even with that meaning the word does not connote extinction, as annihilationists claim, but rather spiritual calamity that will continue forever. (See [MacArthur Commentary](#))

- [Click here for an in depth 3 PAGE discussion in the New International Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

**APOLLUMI IN THE GOSPELS** - Matt. 2:13; Matt. 5:29; Matt. 8:25; Matt. 9:17; Matt. 10:6; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 10:39; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 12:14; Matt. 15:24; Matt. 16:25; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 18:14; Matt. 21:41; Matt. 22:7; Matt. 26:52; Matt. 27:20; Mk. 1:24; Mk. 2:22; Mk. 3:6; Mk. 4:38; Mk. 8:35; Mk. 9:22; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 11:18; Mk. 12:9; Lk. 4:34; Lk. 5:37; Lk. 6:9; Lk. 8:24; Lk. 9:24; Lk. 9:25; Lk. 9:56; Lk. 11:51; Lk. 13:3; Lk. 13:5; Lk. 13:33; Lk. 15:4; Lk. 15:6; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 15:9; Lk. 15:17; Lk. 15:24; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 17:27; Lk. 17:29; Lk. 17:33; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:16; Lk. 21:18; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 6:12; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:39; Jn. 10:10; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 11:50; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 17:12; Jn. 18:9

**Matthew 21:42 Jesus \*said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?"**

KJV Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

BGT Matthew 21:42 Ἀ γει α το ς η σο ς ο δ ποτε ν γνωτε ν τα ς γραφα ς λ θον ν πεδοκ μασαν ο ο κοδομο ντες, ο το ς γεν θη ε ς κεφαλ ν γων α ς παρ κυρ ου γ νετο α τη κα στιν θαυμαστ ν φθαλμο ς μ ν;

NET Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

CSB Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This came from the Lord and is wonderful in our eyes?"

ESV Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

NIV Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: " 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

NLT Matthew 21:42 Then Jesus asked them, "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful to see.'

NRS Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?

NJB Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this is the Lord's doing and we marvel at it?

NAB Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes'?

YLT Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith to them, 'Did ye never read in the Writings, A stone that the builders disallowed, it became head of a corner; from the Lord hath this come to pass, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

MIT Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them: "You have not read—have you?—in the Scriptures: A stone the masons judged to be a misfit— that stone became the keystone of the arch. This was prearranged by Yahveh, and from our perspective it is splendid.

GWN Matthew 21:42 Jesus asked them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. The Lord is responsible for this, and it is amazing for us to see'?

BBE Matthew 21:42 Jesus says to them, Did you never see in the Writings, The stone which the builders put on one side, the same has been made the chief stone of the building: this was the Lord's doing, and it is a wonder in our eyes?

- **Did you never read in the Scriptures:** Mt 21:16
- **The stone:** Ps 118:22,23 Isa 28:16 Zec 3:8,9 Mk 12:10,11 Lu 20:17,18 Ac 4:11 Ro 9:33 Eph 2:20 1Pe 2:4-8
- **and it is:** Hab 1:5 Ac 13:40,41 Eph 3:3-9

#### Related Passages:

Luke 20:17+ But Jesus looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone'?

Mark 12:10+ 10 "Have you not even read this Scripture: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; 11 THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?"

### LEADERS REJECTED THE CORNER STONE

**Jesus \*said** ([historical present tense](#)) **to them**, "**Did you never read** ([anaginosko](#)) **in the Scriptures** ([graphe](#)) - Once again Jesus returns to the Scriptures to make His point. If they had read and understood the words in Psalm 118:22-23, they would have understood that the Stone, the Chief Cornerstone was literally standing before them. And it should have been a wonderful sight to their eyes, if they only had spiritual eyes to see Him.

**THE STONE** ([lithos](#)) **WHICH THE BUILDERS** ([oikodomeo](#) - present tense) **REJECTED** ([apodokimazo](#) - aorist tense - active voice = decision of one's will, volitional choice) - The **builders** in this context refer to the Jewish religious leaders. The idea of **rejected** means they put Jesus to the test and made a conscious, deliberate choice of their will to reject Him as unfit or not genuine! When the Jewish leaders looked at the **Stone** (Christ) Who "invaded" their religious world, He was not Who they wanted, because He did not fit in with their legalistic approach to religion and thus was useless and unfit for what they thought they were building, which would prove to be a spiritual "[house of cards](#)" one which would fall in 70 AD when the Roman general Titus destroyed the Temple and sacked the city of Jerusalem.

The rejection of the Stone is tantamount to the crucifixion of Jesus. But He would not stay rejected, but would be resurrected! His death did not eliminate Him but make Him fit to be what the new structure needed, a Cornerstone.

**Michael Wilkins:** The crowds at Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem had sung out a portion of the last of the Egyptian Hallel psalms, "O Lord, save us," a quotation of Psalm 118:25 (cf. Matt. 21:9). Now Jesus draws on Psalm 118:22 to point to his rejection and future vindication. God has given prominence to his suffering servant like a "capstone" (lit., "head of the corner"), either the stone that held two rows of stones together in a corner ("cornerstone") or the wedge-shaped stone placed at the pinnacle of an arch that locked the ascending stones together. The suffering of the Son will be turned into the position of ultimate prominence and importance.



(See [Matthew, Mark, Luke: Volume One - Page 133](#))

**John MacArthur** explains that "Because the Jewish leaders were looking for the Messiah, when Jesus claimed to be the Christ (Mt 26:63, 64; Jn 1:49-51; 4:25, 26; cf. Mt 16:13-20; Lk 4:14-21) they examined His claim. Based on their blind hearts and false standards (Mt 12:2, 10, 38; 15:1, 2; 16:1; Mk 12:13-34; Jn 8:12-27), they concluded that He did not measure up, so they **rejected** Him (Jn 19:7, 12, 15; cf. 7:41-52; 12:37, 38). Contempt and hatred characterized their rejection (Mt. 26:57-68; 27:20-25, 39-43; Mk 12:12; Lk 6:11; 13:14; Jn 8:59; 10:31, 39; cf. Lk 4:28-30); it was unthinkable to them that Jesus could possibly be the cornerstone of God's kingdom (cf. Ps 118:22). They viewed Him as one who foolishly denounced their religious system (cf. Mt 23:1-36; Mk 8:13-21), was too weak and humble to overthrow the occupying Romans and secure the Jews' national freedom, and was willing to die ignominiously on a cross (Mt. 17:22, 23; 20:17-19; Mk 9:30-32; Luke 18:31-34). He simply did not measure up to any of the Jewish establishment's expectations. (See [1 Peter Commentary - Page 105](#))

**THIS BECAME THE CHIEF** ([kephale](#) - head) **CORNER stone** ([gonia](#)); **THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS** ([thaumastos](#)) **IN OUR EYES** (Ps 118:22-23) - Jesus is explaining that He fulfills the prophecy in Psalm 118:22-23. To reject the Stone, specifically the Chief Corner Stone makes it impossible to build a building, for the Corner Stone was critical for rightly orienting all the stones that subsequently were laid in place. The paradox is that the perfect Lamb of God, the Creator of the Universe, was rejected by His creation, men who had carefully (BUT NOT HONESTLY) evaluated the perfect God Man and found Him not "passing their test"!

**NET NOTE** - Or "capstone," "keystone." Although these meanings are lexically possible, the imagery in Eph 2:20-22 and 1 Cor 3:11 indicates that the term κεφαλὴ γωνίας (kephalē gōnias) refers to a cornerstone, not a capstone. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. The use of Ps 118:22-23 and the "stone imagery" as a reference to Christ and his suffering and exaltation is common in the NT (see also Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:6-8; cf. also Eph 2:20). The irony in the use of Ps 118:22-23 here is that in the OT, Israel was the one rejected (or perhaps her king) by the Gentiles, but in the NT it is Jesus who is rejected by Israel.

**C H Spurgeon** - Our Lord reminds them of David's language in Psalm 118:22,23. They were professedly the builders, and they had rejected him who was the chief corner-stone. Yet the Lord God had made the despised one to be the head of the corner. He was the most conspicuous and honored stone in Israel's building. Against the will of scribe and priest this had been accomplished: for it was the Lord's doing. They might rage, but holy minds adored, and said, "It is marvelous in our eyes. " The sufferings and glory of Christ are the wonder of the universe:" which things the angels desire to look into" ( 1 Peter 1:12). All that relates to him is marvelous in the eyes of his people. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Rejected** (593) [apodokimazo](#) from **apo** = off, away from, pictures separation of one thing from another + [dokimazo](#) = to test, examine, scrutinize to see whether a thing is genuine or not) means to reject or refuse to accept something or someone after testing, scrutiny or examination. The preposition **apo-** speaks of separation and thus conveys the picture of rejecting completely. It means to examine and deem as useless. It means to judge something or someone as not being fit, worthy or genuine and thus something or someone to be rejected. It means to throw out as the result of a test, to put out of office, to repudiate, to disapprove or to declare useless. Eight of the nine NT uses of [apodokimazo](#) refer to men's (primarily Israel and her leaders who should have known better) rejection of the Messiah as genuine, worthy, qualified! **Moulton and Milligan** record this secular use of [apodokimazo](#) "a girdle-dagger suitable for the present purpose has not been found, and I have not thought it right to buy one that might be rejected.

**Wuest** writes that [apodokimazo](#)...refers to the act of putting someone or something to the test for the purpose of putting one's approval upon that person and thus receiving him, this act of testing being carried to the point where no further testing is needed, with the result that one comes to the settled conclusion that the one tested does not meet the requirements of the test and is therefore disapproved, repudiated. This Living Stone in the Person of God the Son became incarnate, lived for thirty-three years in the midst of Israel, offered Himself as its Messiah, was examined by official Israel for the purpose of approving Him as its Messiah, and then repudiated because He was not what official Israel wanted in a Messiah. What a commentary on the totally depraved condition of man's heart.

**APODOKIMAZO** - 9V - Matt. 21:42; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 17:25; Lk. 20:17; Heb. 12:17; 1 Pet. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:7

**Corner** (corner stone) (1137) [gonia](#) from **gonu** = the knee) means literally corner (of street Mt 6:5); figuratively of the "corners" or extremities of the earth (Rev 7:1); of a building the chief corner stone (Mt 21:42, Mk 12:10; Acts 4:11; 1 Pt 2:7); of something done obscurely or in a corner (Acts 26.26)

**AGONIA** - 9x/9v - corner(6), corners(3). Mt. 6:5; 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; 26:26; 1 Pet. 2:7; Rev.

**Marvelous** (2298) **thaumastos** from **thaumazo** = to marvel, to wonder at) describes that which causes one to marvel. Synonyms include **wonderful** (that which excites the feeling of wonder), extraordinary (very unusual or remarkable, outside the normal course of events, going beyond what is usual, regular, or customary), astonishing. **Marvelous** speaks of the highest kind or quality (splendid), of that which is notably superior or of that which causes or excites great wonder or surprise. **Thaumastos** is used to describe God and/or things relating to God and thus which are beyond human comprehension. **Thaumastos** refers to what is unexpected and worthy of notice the amazing thing pertaining to being a cause of wonder or worthy of amazement, wonderful, marvelous, remarkable

**THAUMASTOS - 6X/6V - amazing thing(1), marvelous(5).** Matt. 21:42; Mk. 12:11; Jn. 9:30; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 15:3

1 Peter 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His **marvelous** light;

Revelation 15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and **marvelous**, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

Revelation 15:3 And they \*sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and **marvelous** are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!

#### Allen Ross - Psalm 118:22 "The Stone the Builders Rejected"

Psalm 118 is a beautiful psalm written to praise the LORD for His enduring loyal love. All the evidence from the psalm suggests that it was written after the return from the Babylonian captivity: the LORD had disciplined the nation of Israel for its sin, but then miraculously restored them to their original standing as the people of God. The second part of the psalm records the main features of the thanksgiving service that they had in the sanctuary: the people led by their leader approach the gates of the sanctuary to give praise (v. 19), where they are met by the priests, the gatekeepers who remind them that the righteous enter these gates (v. 20); the worshipers have been delivered by God and so come to praise Him for their salvation (v. 21). That praise is then recorded in verses 22-24:

The stone the builders rejected  
has become the capstone;  
The LORD has done this  
and it is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

As the worshipers proceed towards the altar for their thanksgiving, they pray, "O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success" (v. 25). To this prayer for complete salvation to the priests respond with their blessing in verse 26: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you." The worshipers then complete their praise to God, binding the sacrifice with ropes to the horns of the altar (v. 27).[1]

In its original setting the leader of the people, perhaps the heir to the throne of David, led the people to the sanctuary to praise God for His deliverance from their discipline for their sin at the hands of the nations. The builders would be in his mind the empires of the world, the Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians. And little Judah was a puppet state, a little stone that the builders had thrown away in their sweep for world domination. Now, though, that little stone had become the center of God's building program, the restoration of the covenant. The day that the LORD made was not just another nice day, but the great day of their deliverance from the exile.

In the New Testament Psalm 118 is used in three important places. First, the people use phrases from the psalm at Jesus' triumphal entry (Matt. 21:6-11). Psalms 113-118 were designated to be sung at the festivals—people would know the words of this psalm better than most others. But the followers of Jesus knew Him as the "coming one," as indeed Martha had just declared (John 11). And so as He rode into Jerusalem, His followers proclaimed "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD." He was not simply a leader of worshipers (although He would be that of course), but the Messiah, the one coming to His temple. So they cried "save us," which in the language of the psalm would be hosanna (pronounced ho-she-ana), or in Greek, "Hosanna." These lines have become fixed in the liturgy of the church.

Second, during the passion week Jesus expounded the point the psalm was making in terms of its fulfillment of Him (Matt. 21:42-44). In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus is often identified as the true Israel, the true Seed. And so in His days, the builders are the

leaders of the nation, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the like; and He is the Stone. He was rejected by the leaders who were trying to form the nation, and He, the rejected one, became the center of God's program, the New Covenant. Jesus applied the psalm by saying to those leaders, "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." It is clear, then, that the words of the psalm had to do with building God's kingdom. Now it would be built around and on the Rejected One, and with people who trust in Him for their salvation.

Third, since Psalms 113-118 were prescribed for the festivals, especially the passover celebration, Psalm 118 played a role in the events in the upper room. Matthew 26:30 says that they sang a hymn, and then went out to the garden. Psalms 117 and 118 would have been sung after the passover meal. Therefore, this reference in Matthew has Psalm 118 in mind. After all the words and events in the upper room, as Jesus and His disciples head out to the garden, they do so singing "the stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone," and "blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD," and "bind the sacrifice to the horns of the altar."

[1] This is the reading of the Hebrew text, and a good number of the English versions. The NIV has "with boughs in hand, join the festal procession up to the horns of the altar," representing the Greek version. Since this psalm was designated for the festivals, the Hebrew version was no doubt used by the Jews in Jesus' day.

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## NO OTHER ROCK

The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. MATTHEW 21:42

THOSE TO WHOM CHRIST FIRST came did not think Him suitable to be their Messiah. So they refused to accept Him and nailed Him on a cross instead. But now what do we see? That same Jesus whom they thought unfit to be their king God has made King of glory, Lord of heaven and earth. All things are in His hands, all power, all mercy, all judgment. The very rulers who rejected Him and demanded His crucifixion, when they awake on the judgment morning, shall see as their Judge the same Jesus whom they thus despised and condemned to die.

A great many people now think Christ unsuitable to be their Master. They do not consider it an honour to be called Christians. They are embarrassed at His name or to include themselves among His followers. They do not care to model their life on His holy and perfect life. All these should remember that Christ has highest honour in heaven. No angel is ashamed to speak His name. Redeemed spirits praise Him day and night. God the Father has exalted Him to the throne of eternal power and glory. Why, then, should sinful men be ashamed to claim Him as Lord?

They should remember, also, that God has made Him the cornerstone of the whole building not made with hands. No life that is not built on Him can stand. There is no other rock on which to rest their hope. If they ever are saved it must be by this same Jesus whom they are now rejecting.

How can they live who, sinning, never seek  
To have their sins forgiven;  
Who, knowing that the strongest yet are weak,  
Ask not thy grace and never know thy peace -  
The gift unspeakable of thy release,  
The pardon sealed in heaven?

J.R. MILLER

**Matthew 21:43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.**

KJV Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

BGT Matthew 21:43 δι το το λ γω μ ν τι ρθ σεται φ μ ν βασιλε α το θεο κα δοθ σεται θνει ποιο ντι το ς καρπο ς α τ ς.

NET Matthew 21:43 For this reason I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.

CSB Matthew 21:43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing its fruit.

ESV Matthew 21:43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.

NIV Matthew 21:43 "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.

NLT Matthew 21:43 I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit.

NRS Matthew 21:43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

NJB Matthew 21:43 'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

NAB Matthew 21:43 Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.

YLT Matthew 21:43 'Because of this I say to you, that the reign of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth its fruit;

MIT Matthew 21:43 This is why I declare to you that God's kingdom will be wrested from you and given to a people who will implement it. Moreover, whoever falls against this stone will be broken.

GWN Matthew 21:43 That is why I can guarantee that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce what God wants.

BBE Matthew 21:43 For this reason I say to you, The kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and will be given to a nation producing the fruits of it.

RSV Matthew 21:43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it."

NKJ Matthew 21:43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

ASV Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

DBY Matthew 21:43 Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation producing the fruits of it.

- **the kingdom of God will be taken away from you:** Mt 21:41 Mt 8:11-12 Mt 12:28 Isa 28:2 Lu 17:20-21 Joh 3:3,5
- **given to a people, producing the fruit of it:** Ex 19:6 Isa 26:2 1Co 13:2 1Pe 2:9

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 8:11-12+ "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the **kingdom of heaven** (~kingdom of God); 12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Luke 17:20-21+ (Click here for multiple in depth comments on the **Kingdom of God**) Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the **kingdom of God** was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

#### Related Resources:

- [Luke 17:20-37 The Present and Future Kingdom](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 17:20-21 The Invisible Kingdom of God, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 17:20-21 The Invisible Kingdom of God, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

John 3:3, 5+ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the **kingdom of God**." 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the **kingdom of God**."

The diagram is a horizontal timeline titled "The Eternal Kingdom of God". It is divided into three main sections: "Davidic Kingdom Past", "Mystery Form of the Kingdom Present", and "Messianic Kingdom Future".

- Davidic Kingdom Past:** Includes the date "1011 B.C." and the date "586 B.C.".
- Mystery Form of the Kingdom Present:** Includes the events "First Advent Pentecost", "The Church", "The Rapture", and "Second Advent".
- Messianic Kingdom Future:** Includes the events "End of Millennium" and "Eternal State".

Arrows at both ends of the timeline indicate a continuous progression from past to future.

## THE HAMMER OF JUDGMENT FALLS ON THESE FAKERS

**C H Spurgeon** - The doom of the unfaithful religious builders was the result of their sin: **"Therefore say I unto you."** They were to love the blessings of the gospel: **"The kingdom of God shall be arisen from you."** All share in the honors and offices of that kingdom would be refused them. That loss would be aggravated by their seeing it **"given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."** What a warning is this to our own country! We, too, are seeing the sacrifice and deity of our Lord questioned, and his sacred Word assailed by those who should have been its advocates. Unless there is a speedy amendment, the Lord may take away the candlestick out of its place (Rev 2:4-5+), and find another race which will prove more faithful to him and to his gospel than our own has been. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**KINGDOM OF GOD - 66X/65V** - Matt. 12:28; Matt. 19:24; Matt. 21:31; Matt. 21:43; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 4:11; Mk. 4:26; Mk. 4:30; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:47; Mk. 10:14; Mk. 10:15; Mk. 10:23; Mk. 10:24; Mk. 10:25; Mk. 12:34; Mk. 14:25; Mk. 15:43; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 7:28; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:27; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 9:62; Lk. 10:9; Lk. 10:11; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 13:18; Lk. 13:20; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:29; Lk. 14:15; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 17:20; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:24; Lk. 18:25; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 21:31; Lk. 22:16; Lk. 22:18; Lk. 23:51; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 3:5; Acts 1:3; Acts 8:12; Acts 14:22; Acts 19:8; Acts 28:23; Acts 28:31; Rom. 14:17; 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 6:9; 1 Co. 6:10; 1 Co. 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Col. 4:11; 2 Thess. 1:5

**KINGDOM OF HEAVEN - 32X/31V** - Matt. 3:2; Matt. 4:17; Matt. 5:3; Matt. 5:10; Matt. 5:19; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 7:21; Matt. 8:11; Matt. 10:7; Matt. 11:11; Matt. 11:12; Matt. 13:11; Matt. 13:24; Matt. 13:31; Matt. 13:33; Matt. 13:44; Matt. 13:45; Matt. 13:47; Matt. 13:52; Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:1; Matt. 18:3; Matt. 18:4; Matt. 18:23; Matt. 19:12; Matt. 19:14; Matt. 19:23; Matt. 20:1; Matt. 22:2; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 25:1

**Fruit** (2590) [karpos](#) is used in its literal sense to refer to fruit, produce or offspring, which describes that which is produced by the inherent energy of a living organism. **Karpōs** is what something naturally produces. Figuratively, **karpōs** is used of the consequence of physical, mental, or spiritual action. In the NT the figurative (metaphorical) uses predominate and this is particularly true in the Gospels, where human actions and words are viewed as **fruit** growing out of a person's essential being or character (cf Jn 15:5+). **Karpōs** refers to that which originates or comes from something producing an effect or result (benefit, advantage, profit, utility).



**KARPOS IN GOSPELS** - Matt. 3:8; Matt. 3:10; Matt. 7:16; Matt. 7:17; Matt. 7:18; Matt. 7:19; Matt. 7:20; Matt. 12:33; Matt. 13:8; Matt. 13:26; Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:34; Matt. 21:41; Matt. 21:43; Mk. 4:7; Mk. 4:8; Mk. 4:29; Mk. 11:14; Mk. 12:2; Lk. 1:42; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 3:9; Lk. 6:43; Lk. 6:44; Lk. 8:8; Lk. 12:17; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:9; Lk. 20:10; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 15:2; Jn. 15:4; Jn. 15:5; Jn. 15:8; Jn. 15:16

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## H A Ironside - Matthew 21:43

Israel after the flesh was to be put aside. The kingdom for which they had waited so long was to be lost to them forever. A new and elect nation, a regenerated Israel, shall possess the kingdom eventually. Meantime the grace of God is going out to the Gentiles. It is a terribly dangerous thing to trifle with the mercy of God. Little did the Jewish leaders realize that they were sealing their own doom in rejecting Jesus, the One sent of God to bring them into fullness of blessing if they had received Him. They lost their opportunity because they were blinded by self-interest and so they failed to recognize their Messiah when He came in exact accord with the Scriptures of the prophets which they professed to reverence. Mere knowledge of the letter of the Word saves no one. It is those who believe in the Christ of whom the book of God speaks who are made wise for salvation (2 Timothy 3:15). To reject Him is fatal.

What will you do without Him,  
When He has shut the door,  
And you are left outside, because  
You would not come before?  
When it is no use knocking,  
No use to stand and wait,  
For the word of doom tolls thro' your heart,  
That terrible "Too late!"  
—F. R. Havergal

**Matthew 21:44 "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."**

KJV Matthew 21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

BGT Matthew 21:44 [κα πεισ ν π τ ν λ θον το τον συνθλασθ σεται· φ ν δ ν π σ λικμ σει α τ ν.]

NET Matthew 21:44 The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and the one on whom it falls will be crushed."

CSB Matthew 21:44 [Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whoever it falls, it will grind him to powder!]"

ESV Matthew 21:44 And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

NIV Matthew 21:44 He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."

NLT Matthew 21:44 Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on. "

NRS Matthew 21:44 The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

NAB Matthew 21:44 ( The one who falls on this stone will be dashed to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.)"

YLT Matthew 21:44 and he who is falling on this stone shall be broken, and on whomsoever it may fall it will crush him to pieces.'

MIT Matthew 21:44 But as for the one on whom that stone comes smashing down—it will pulverize him."

- **And he who falls on this stone:** Ps 2:12 Isa 8:14,15 60:12 Zec 12:3 Lu 20:18 Ro 9:33 2Co 4:3,4 1Pe 2:8

■ **but on whomever it falls:** Mt 26:24 27:25 Ps 2:9 21:8,9 110:5,6 Da 2:34,35,44,45 Joh 19:11 1Th 2:16 Heb 2:2,3

#### Related Passage:

Isaiah 28:16 ([MESSIANIC PASSAGE](#)) Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

Luke 20:18+ "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

### REJECTORS WILL BE PULVERIZED!

**And he who falls ([pipto](#)) on this stone ([lithos](#)) will be broken to pieces ([sunthlao](#)); but on whomever it falls ([pipto](#)), it will scatter him like dust ([likmao](#))** - MIT = "But as for the one on whom that stone comes smashing down—it will pulverize him." So clearly the Stone crushes whether it falls on someone or someone falls on it. In short, anyone (including you dear reader if you have rejected the Stone) who persists in opposing Christ will be pulverized! To pulverize something means to make it into a powder by breaking it up and/or causing it to become dust. This is a vivid picture of the horrible fate for all who reject the Stone, whether they be Jews or Gentiles! They won't be annihilated, but destroyed, doomed, destined for destruction (see [apoleia](#)) forever! And that's a long time!

Jesus' words definitely recall Daniel's messianic prophecy of the Stone striking Nebuchadnezzar's statue -

Daniel 2:34-35+ ([MESSIANIC PASSAGE](#)) "You continued looking until a **STONE** was cut out without hands, and **IT** struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the **STONE** that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel 2:44-45+ ([MESSIANIC PASSAGE](#)) "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 "Inasmuch as you saw that a **STONE** was cut out of the mountain without hands and that **IT** crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

**R Kent Hughes** - Our attitude toward Jesus is everything. We will either fall or rise according to our faith or lack of faith in Him. If we fall over Him, He will fall on us, bringing eternal destruction upon our souls. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - Those who stumble over Christ, the chief corner-stone of the Church, are injured: they suffer grievous bruising and breathing, but he remains unhurt. Opposition to Jesus is injury to ourselves. Those upon whom he falls in wrath are ground to powder; for the results of his anger are overwhelming, fatal, irretrievable. Oppose him, and you suffer but when he arises in his might, and opposes you, destruction has already come to you. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

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**Broken to pieces** ([4917](#))([sunthlao](#) from [sun/syn](#) = together + [thlao](#) = to crush) means literally to crush together, to dash to pieces. BDAG - to crush in such a way that an object is put in pieces. The only other NT uses is in the parallel passage in Mt 21:44. In the Septuagint used of shattering Sisera's head (Jdg 5:26), of a millstone crushing Abimelech's skull (Jdg 9:53), of God surely shattering the head of His enemies (Ps 68:21), of the Messiah shattering kings in the day of God's wrath (Ps 110:5, cf Ps 110:6 - the same psalm Jesus quotes from in Luke 20:42+).

**Scatter like dust** ([3039](#))([likmao](#) from [likmos](#) = a winnowing fan) means to winnow chaff from grain, to blow away like chaff, to sweep out of sight or out of existence (those who reject Christ won't cease to exist, but they will cease to exist in the presence of God's glory!). The only other NT use is Mt 21:44 in the same context as Luke's use.

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#### QUESTION - [Why is Jesus called the stumbling stone in Matthew 21:43-44?](#)

**ANSWER** - In Matthew 21:44, Jesus says, "He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." The key to understanding this statement lies in the context of the verse and the larger conversation Jesus was having.

Jesus was teaching in the temple courts when the chief priests and elders approached Him and demanded to know the source of His

authority. In response, Jesus asked them about John the Baptist—was he a prophet of God or not? The religious leaders, fearing the people's response, refused to reveal their true opinion on the matter. In turn, Jesus refused to reveal the source of His authority (Matthew 21:23-27). In doing so, Jesus made it clear that the Jewish leaders themselves had no authority to judge Him.

Jesus then related two parables concerning vineyards. In the first, Jesus told of [two sons](#) who were told by their father to go work in the vineyard. The first son initially refused but later changed his mind and went to work. The second son promised to work, but he never went to the vineyard. Jesus applied this to the religious leaders of Israel, who were like the second son—they expressed agreement with the Father but, in the final analysis, were disobedient. The sinners who responded to John the Baptist's message were like the first son—they seemed unlikely candidates for heaven, but they repented and thus will enter the kingdom (verses 28-32).

In the [second parable](#), Jesus tells of a landowner who, at harvest time, sent some servants to his vineyard to collect the fruit. However, the farmers who were tending the vineyard were a wicked lot, and when the servants arrived, the farmers beat some of them and killed others. Finally, the landowner sent his own son to collect the fruit, expecting that the farmers would show him respect. But the farmers treated the son worst of all, throwing him out of the vineyard and killing him (Matthew 21:33-39).

Jesus then asks a question: "When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" (Matthew 21:40). The chief priests and elders respond, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end" (Matthew 21:41). Jesus then presses His point home with a quotation from Psalm 118: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes" (Matthew 21:42). After a warning that the religious leaders will not inherit the kingdom (Matthew 21:43), we come to the statement in question, which is the culmination of a series of dire pronouncements aimed at the chief priests and elders.

Jesus begins with a question about John the Baptist in Matthew 21:25, but by the end of the conversation, Jesus is plainly speaking of Himself, referring to a "father" sending his "son" who was killed (Matthew 21:37). He then immediately quotes a Messianic prophecy (Matthew 21:42), in effect claiming to be the long-awaited Messiah. The progression is logical: a rejection of John leads one naturally to a rejection of Christ, to whom John pointed (John 1:29, 3:30).

The stone which "the builders rejected" in Mt 21:42 is Jesus. Although rejected, He nevertheless becomes the "chief cornerstone" (NKJV). See also Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; and 1 Peter 2:6-8. The builders' rejection of the stone is a reference to Christ's crucifixion. The Lord's choice of the stone to be the cornerstone is a reference to Christ's resurrection. God chose His Son, despised and rejected by the world, to be the foundation of His church (1 Corinthians 3:11). "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation" (Isaiah 28:16).

Now, there are consequences for coming into contact with a stone. If you trip over the edge of a rock and fall on it, you may break some bones. If a large enough rock falls on top of you, you may be killed. Jesus uses these truths to deliver a warning to the Jewish leaders.

The stone in Mt 21:44 is also Jesus. In saying that those who fall on this stone "will be broken to pieces," Jesus is warning against opposing Him. Defying Jesus is like beating one's head against a solid rock—a foolish action. In saying that those upon whom the stone falls "will be crushed," Jesus is warning against ignoring Him or trivializing Him. Apathy towards Jesus is like standing in the way of a falling rock—another foolish action. "I am here to do God's work," Jesus essentially says. "The foundation for the church will be laid. It is unwise to oppose Me because God's work is not inconsequential."

Rejection of the Savior is fatal. Unfortunately, many do reject Him. "He will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall" (Isaiah 8:14). To persistently reject the Savior is to court judgment so severe that the only thing left will be dust. The prophet Daniel gives a similar picture of the Messiah, likening Him to a rock "cut out, but not by human hands," which smashes into the nations of the world and completely obliterates them (Daniel 2:31-45).

Matthew 21:44 is a call to faith, an appeal to open one's eyes and see that Jesus is indeed the Son of God sent into the world. The verse is also a strict warning against rejecting Jesus Christ. He is the sure Rock of salvation for those who believe, but an immovable stumbling stone for those who do not.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [What is the significance of a capstone in the Bible?](#)

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#### **QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Since ancient times, builders have used cornerstones in their construction projects. A cornerstone was the principal stone, usually placed at the corner of an edifice, to guide the workers in their course. The cornerstone was usually one of the largest, the most solid, and the most carefully constructed of any in the edifice. The Bible describes Jesus as the cornerstone that His church

would be built upon. He is foundational. Once the cornerstone was set, it became the basis for determining every measurement in the remaining construction; everything was aligned to it. As the cornerstone of the building of the church, Jesus is our standard of measure and alignment.

The book of Isaiah has many references to the Messiah to come. In several places the Messiah is referred to as “the cornerstone,” such as in this prophecy: “So this is what the sovereign Lord says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed. I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line’” (Isaiah 28:16–17). In context, God speaks to the scoffers and boasters of Judah, and He promises to send the cornerstone—His precious Son—who will provide the firm foundation for their lives, if they would but trust in Him.

In the New Testament, the cornerstone metaphor is continued. The apostle Paul desires for the Ephesian Christians to know Christ better: “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:19–21). Furthermore, in 1 Peter 2:6, what Isaiah said centuries before is affirmed in exactly the same words.

Peter says that Jesus, as our cornerstone, is “chosen by God and precious to him” (1 Peter 2:4). The Cornerstone is also reliable, and “the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame” (verse 6).

Unfortunately, not everyone aligns with the cornerstone. Some accept Christ; some reject Him. Jesus is the “stone the builders rejected” (Mark 12:10; cf. Psalm 118:22). When news of the Messiah’s arrival came to the [magi in the East](#), they determined to bring Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But when that same news came to [King Herod](#) in Jerusalem, his response was to attempt to kill Him. From the very beginning, Jesus was “a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall” (1 Peter 2:8).

How can people reject God’s chosen, precious cornerstone? Simply put, they want to build something different from what God is building. Just as the people building the [tower of Babel](#) rebelled against God and pursued their own project, those who reject Christ disregard God’s plan in favor of their own. Judgment is promised to all those who reject Christ: “Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed” (Matthew 21:44).

#### Related Resource:

- [Leon Patillo's vocal - Cornerstone](#)

**Matthew 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them.**

KJV Matthew 21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

BGT Matthew 21:45 Καὶ κοῦσαντες οἱ ῥχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τὰς παραβολὰς αὐτοῦ γινώσκοντες περὶ αὐτοῦ λαλεῖν.

NET Matthew 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.

CSB Matthew 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they knew He was speaking about them.

ESV Matthew 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them.

NIV Matthew 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them.

NLT Matthew 21:45 When the leading priests and Pharisees heard this parable, they realized he was telling the story against them-- they were the wicked farmers.

NRS Matthew 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.

NJB Matthew 21:45 When they heard his parables, the chief priests and the scribes realised he was speaking about them,

NAB Matthew 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he was speaking about them.

YLT Matthew 21:45 And the chief priests and the Pharisees having heard his similes, knew that of them he speaketh,

- **they:** Mt 12:12 Lu 11:45 20:19

#### Related Passages:

Luke 20:19+ "The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them.

Mark 12:12+ And they (RELIGIOUS LEADERS) were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them (SEE CONTEXT - Mk 12:1 "He began to speak to them in parables" - CLEARLY "THEM" IS THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS). And so they left Him and went away.

### THE LIGHTBULB FINALLY GOES OFF!

**When the chief priests** ([archiereus](#)) **and the Pharisees** ([pharisaiois](#)) **heard** ([akouo](#)) **His parables** ([parabole](#)) - They **heard** ([akouo](#)) but they did not heed. They could not claim ignorance. They knew exactly what was prophesied for them. The **parables** is plural so would seem to include all 3 of these concluding parables in Matthew 21-22. These **parables** functioned like mirrors as described by James 1:23, for these men looked at their "natural face in a mirror" and realized the man in the mirror was each of them! Talk about a "wake up call!"

**They understood** ([ginosko](#)) **that He was speaking about them** - Even these foolish men can add "**2 + 2**" and arrive at the correct conclusion.

**MacArthur** - They knew they were the son who falsely told his father he would work in the field but then did not go and that they were the wretched vine-growers who despised the vineyard owner and beat and killed his servants and eventually killed his son. They knew they were the builders who had rejected the stone that would become the chief corner stone and that, because of that rejection they themselves would be rejected by God and forbidden entrance into His kingdom. But as always, in spite of what they understood, the Jewish leaders took nothing Jesus said to heart. They heard but refused to heed....They would not repent, and therefore could not be forgiven. They knew the gracious truth about Jesus but would not follow Him, and they knew the damning truth about their own sin but would not turn from it. (See [The MacArthur Commentary](#))

**C H Spurgeon** -They had tried to turn aside the point of his parables; but they had tried in vain: the likenesses were striking, the parallels were perfect, they could not help knowing that he spake of them. Such parables; so true, so cutting, so pertinent, how could they escape them, or endure them? ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 21:46 When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.**

KJV Matthew 21:46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

BGT Matthew 21:46 κα ζητο ντες α τ ν κρατσαι φοβθησαν το ς χλους, πε ε ς προφ την α τ ν ε χον.

NET Matthew 21:46 They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds, because the crowds regarded him as a prophet.

CSB Matthew 21:46 Although they were looking for a way to arrest Him, they feared the crowds, because they regarded Him as a prophet.

ESV Matthew 21:46 And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

NIV Matthew 21:46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

NLT Matthew 21:46 They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds, who considered Jesus to



be a prophet.

NRS Matthew 21:46 They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

NJB Matthew 21:46 but though they would have liked to arrest him they were afraid of the crowds, who looked on him as a prophet.

NAB Matthew 21:46 And although they were attempting to arrest him, they feared the crowds, for they regarded him as a prophet.

YLT Matthew 21:46 and seeking to lay hold on him, they feared the multitudes, seeing they were holding him as a prophet.

MIT Matthew 21:46 They wanted to arrest him, but they feared public opinion because he was esteemed as a prophet.

- **they sought:** 2Sa 12:7-13 Pr 9:7-9 15:12 Isa 29:1 Joh 7:7
- **because:** Mt 21:11 Lu 7:16,39 Joh 7:40,41 Ac 2:22

#### Related Passages:

Luke 7:16+ Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"

John 7:40-41+ (NOTE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PROPHET AND CHRIST) Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "**This certainly is the Prophet.**" 41 Others were saying, "**This is the Christ.**" Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"

Luke 20:19+ The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them.

Mark 12:12+ And they were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him and went away.

### THE WRONG REACTION TO THE TRUTH PROCLAIMED

**When they sought to seize ([krateo](#)) Him, they feared ([phobeo](#)) the people** (Literally - crowds) - What a sad verse. Having heard Jesus' scathing words and understood them as predicting their fate, one would have thought this might have put the fear of the Lord in their hearts. But it was not to be, because their hearts were so shellacked over with willful rejection that even the sword of the Spirit could not penetrate. So instead of fearing the Lord, these fools feared the people. They were more worried about their temporal skin than their eternal destiny. And tragically, isn't that the natural reaction of most of humanity?

**Charles Swindoll:** The message hit its target with full force. Up until that moment, the chief priests and Pharisees had been oblivious as to where they fit in Jesus' parables. After the one-two punch delivered in the stories of the two sons and the unfaithful tenants, Jesus got their attention. They now understood that He had been speaking about them (Mt 21:45). Though they fumed in rage, they could do nothing to Jesus in that public forum of the temple court. Because the people (rightly) believed that Jesus was a genuine prophet, the Jewish leaders feared openly arresting Him (Mt 21:46). They would have to wait for a more opportune moment. (See [Insights on Matthew 16--28 - Page 162](#))

*They were not God-pleasers  
but men-pleasers.*  
-- John MacArthur

**Because** (term of explanation) **they considered Him to be a prophet** - This is statement I would say is "[close but no cigar!](#)", an idiom which is used to indicate that one is almost correct but not fully correct. A **prophet**? Yes, indeed, He was **prophet**! In fact, He was **THE** Prophet (Dt 18:15-18+). So in considering Jesus to be a **prophet** (Mt 21:11+) the people were close to the truth. However, most of the people felt short of considering Him to be the Savior, their long expected Messiah! And salvation is not horseshoes, so being close to the goal doesn't not count!

**Stu Weber:** The hypocrites could take a hint. They knew Jesus was accusing them of mismanaging God's kingdom and that he was pronouncing judgment on them. They should have repented in the face of the truth, but instead they decided to remove the truth and

continue in their denial. They were still thinking that if they could kill Jesus, they would win. They were tragically mistaken. How blind is the insanity of unbelief, especially when marked by hatred and bitterness. (See [Holman New Testament Commentary - Matthew](#))

**D. A. Carson:** The pericope ends with magnificent yet tragic irony (v.46). The religious leaders and others who do not accept God's Messiah are told they will reject Jesus and be crushed. But instead of taking the warning, they hunt for ways to arrest him, hindered only by fear of the people who accept Jesus as a prophet, and so trigger the very situation they have been warned about—a dramatic example of God's poetic justice. God in the Scriptures foretells this very event. These men, prompted by hatred, rush to bring it to pass. (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Page 98](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - Since they could not answer him, they would apprehend him. Happily, the multitude thought too well of Jesus to allow of their laying hands on him, though they sought to do so. These great religionists were as cowardly as they were cruel: they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet. They dared not tell the truth concerning John because they feared the people, and that feat restrained their anger against John's Lord. It was arranged, in the order of providence, that ecclesiastical malice should be held in check by popular feeling. This was an instance of the way in which full often the earth has helped the woman ( Revelation 12:16), and the will of the masses has screened the servants of God from priestly cruelty. He who rules all things sets in motion a high order of politics in the affairs of men in reference to his church. At times, princes have saved men of God from priestly rancor, and anon the multitude has preserved them from aristocratic hate. One way or another, Jehovah knows how to preserve his son, and all those who are with him, until the hour comes when by their deaths they can glorify his name, and enter into glory themselves. ([Matthew 21 Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur:** [Judgment on Christ's Rejectors \(full sermon\)](#) - There are two things there.

**First** is judgment.

**Second** is replacement. Mark that. First is judgment, the replacement. So, they have said it with their own mouths they have concluded the illustration.

Now, **thirdly**, I want you to see the explanation. And this is missed by many people, but I want you to see it. This is the explanation. So powerful. Because Jesus speaks, explaining the parable, but explaining it in a veiled way. Watch verse 42, the explanation. "Jesus saith unto them, 'Did ye never read in the Scriptures, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"'" . . .

The rejected stone is the crucified Christ; the restored cornerstone is the resurrected Christ. It couldn't be more clearly said than that. Peter reiterates the same message in his first epistle, chapter 2, "Behold I lay in Zion" – verse 6 – "a chief cornerstone, elect, precious. He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, who believe He is precious. Unto them who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is become the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." Peter says the same thing. Christ is the cornerstone. Christ is the cornerstone.

Paul says it in Ephesians chapter 2. Says, "We are fellow citizens" – verse 19 – "with the saints, in the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone." Now, listen carefully and get this. The Lord is saying, by quoting Psalm 118:22 and 23 – the man – the men in the tenant farmer situation took the son out, and they slew the son. And these leaders say, "Well, when that man comes back, he's going to miserably destroy those wicked sinners and take away the vineyard from them." And Jesus says to them, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Haven't you read that?" And what He is saying is this: the stone is Jesus Christ. Right? We've seen that. The rejection constitutes the rejection of Israel. The restoration constitutes His resurrection and His following glory. . .

Jesus says to the leaders of Israel, "You have lost the right to be in the place of blessing." God turned from Israel. That was the end of a great day. Oh, my. That was the end of a great era. God turned away from Israel as the people of blessing and says, "I will give it to a nation." What nation? Well, the word means people. What people? Well, the same nation of which Peter speaks in 1 Peter 2, "An holy nation." I believe it's the Church, the redeemed of this age.

So, those two results. A kingdom of God shall be taken from you, given to someone else. That's the first one. Taken away. That's sad. That's replacement that we talked about earlier. You forfeited it. And Israel today is unblessed. We've been learning about that in Romans 9, 10, and 11, and I'm not going to, and I'm not going to go into developing it all, but Israel has been removed for the time being from the place of blessing.

You say, "Will they ever come back?" Yes, they will. Yes, they will. God will graft them in, it says in Romans. All Israel will be saved (Ro 11:26+). The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. "The day will come" – says Zechariah – "when they'll look on Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as an only son." Salvation will come to Israel.

**Related Resource:**

- Scott Harris - sermon [Results of Rejecting the Son](#)