

Jesus: No Spin Matthew Chapter Twenty One: Reception & Rejection

personal / group study for use with the message of February 28th and March 1st, 2009

"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" (Matthew 21:42).

As Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, the people are overjoyed! They are singing the Passover songs of ascent, praising Jesus who they hope will save them from Rome. Jesus arrives on a colt of a donkey, the symbol of peace.

Introduction.

Even riding into the city on a lowly donkey, the temple authorities recognize that Jesus is declaring Himself King. The crowd shouted words from Psalm 118:25-26, fulfilling another Messianic prophecy that the Jewish leaders would have recognized. Jesus quotes from Psalm 118:22-23 in Matthew 21:42 referring to Himself.

Read.

Matthew 21

The Triumphal Entry

¹As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

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

⁵"Say to the Daughter of Zion,
'See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"^[a]

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"Hosanna^[b] to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"^[c]

"Hosanna^[d] in the highest!"

¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

¹¹The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus at the Temple

¹²Jesus 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. ¹³"It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer,^[e] but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'^[f]"

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

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'?"

¹⁷And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

The Fig Tree Withers

¹⁸Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.

²⁰When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.

²¹Jesus 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. ²²If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

²³Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"

²⁴Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'From men'—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."
Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

The Parable of the Two Sons

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.'

²⁹" 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

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. ³²For 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."

The Parable of the Tenants

³³"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. ³⁴When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

³⁵"The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. ³⁷Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

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.' ³⁹So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

⁴⁰"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

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."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

"The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone^[1];
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes^[1]?"

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. ⁴⁴He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."^[1]

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. ⁴⁶They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

**All scripture taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.*

Questions.

ThinkAboutIt...

1. If you had only one more week to live what would you do with your time?
2. What are the two reactions to Jesus in this chapter?

ReflectOnIt...

3. Do you think that the crowds understand who Jesus is? Why did they praise Him?
4. Compare Matthew 21:5 and Zechariah 9:9. Do you see any difference? What were they and why would Matthew have left out certain words or phrases?
5. In Matthew 21:14-16, Jesus quotes from Psalm 8, which speaks of infants and little children giving praise to God. The temple leaders understood that He was saying that He is God. What do you say to people who say, Jesus never claimed to be God?
6. Why is Jesus so angry when He enters the temple courts? Why make such a public scene? What prophecy does He quote as He clears the temple? Also see Mark 11:15-18, Luke 19:45-47.
7. What gives Him the right to behave like this?
8. We see the judgment of God coming, as Jesus curses the fig tree (that has leaves like it has fruit, but there is no fruit on it). Explain why Jesus curses the fig tree. After this object lesson, what does He teach His disciples about prayer?
9. In the closing verses of this chapter Jesus tells the temple leaders that because they have rejected Him and are not producing fruit the Kingdom of God will be taken away from them. Who does Jesus say will be given the Kingdom of Heaven?

RespondToIt...

Jesus taught that He is the foundation stone, the corner stone of the spiritual House of God.

10. What is your reaction to Jesus?
11. What is the fruit that Jesus wants to see produced in your life?