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Tuesday & Wednesday Bible Study

## The King’s Judgments

We enter the fourth major section of Matthew’s gospel. “The Rejection of the King.” In this section (Matthew 21:1 – 22:14), the Lord Jesus revealed the sins of Israel and explained why the religious leaders rejected Him and His message.

The events described in this chapter are also mentioned in the other Synoptic Gospels (Mark 11, Luke 19, and John 12), providing a comprehensive account of the significant moments in the life of Jesus. In this chapter, we will gain a deeper understanding of the growing tensions between Jesus and the religious establishment, as well as the increasing anticipation and expectation surrounding the Messiah’s arrival.

Matthew 21 is pivotal, because it marks the beginning of Jesus’ final week before His crucifixion. It is filled with,

- significant events,
- powerful teachings,
- and dramatic confrontations revealing Jesus’ identity as the Messiah
- while challenging the religious leaders and their authority.

In this chapter,

- we see the fulfillment of prophecy,
- the demonstration of Jesus’ divine authority, and
- His calls for genuine faith and obedience.

### **Matthew 21:1-11**

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

<sup>2</sup> Saying unto them, **Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.**

<sup>3</sup> **And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.**

<sup>4</sup> All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

<sup>5</sup> Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

<sup>6</sup> And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

<sup>7</sup> And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.

<sup>8</sup> And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

<sup>9</sup> And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

<sup>10</sup> And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

<sup>11</sup> And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

The chapter begins with Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It marked the beginning of the final week of His earthly ministry. It fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and revealed Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

As He approaches the city, He instructs His disciples to bring Him a donkey and its colt, fulfilling the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 "Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your King comes to you, humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

This act is deeply symbolic—unlike earthly kings who enter cities on warhorses, Jesus comes in peace, signifying His role as a humble and righteous King. The crowd recognizes Him as the long-awaited Messiah, spreading their cloaks on the road and waving palm branches as they shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Their cries reflect their longing for salvation, yet many misunderstand the nature of Jesus' kingdom, expecting a political liberator rather than a suffering Savior.

The word "Hosanna" means "save now" and was a cry of praise acknowledging Jesus as the Savior. By proclaiming Him as the "Son of David," the people recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the descendant of King David who would establish an everlasting kingdom.

The crowd's adoration of Jesus as the Messiah was a public declaration of His divine nature and mission. We must not think the clothes on our backs are too dear to part with for the service of our Christ. What we are seeing is that those that take Christ for their King, must lay their all under his feet. After all, this is the week that leads to His crucifixion.

### **Matthew 12:12-22**

<sup>12</sup> 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,

<sup>13</sup> 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.**

<sup>14</sup> And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

<sup>15</sup> And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased,

<sup>16</sup> And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, **Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?**

<sup>17</sup> And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

<sup>18</sup> Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

<sup>19</sup> And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, **Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.** And presently the fig tree withered away.

<sup>20</sup> And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

<sup>21</sup> 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.**

<sup>22</sup> **And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.**

Immediately after entering Jerusalem, Jesus heads to the temple and drives out the merchants and money changers, stopping the commercial activities.

- Selling cattle,
- Selling goats
- Selling pigeons, etc.

He overturns their tables and declares, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”

This forceful action is not just about commercial corruption, it is a dramatic rebuke of the religious leaders who have allowed the temple, meant for worship, to become a place of exploitation. His cleansing of the temple signals a call to true worship and holiness, not a marketplace, challenging the hypocrisy of those who claim to serve God while profiting from His people.

Think about this, if Christ came now into many parts of his visible church, how many secret evils he would discover and cleanse! How many things daily practiced under the cloak of religion, would he show to be more suitable to a den of thieves than to a house of prayer! Food for thought.

Following this event, Jesus carries out his compassionate work demonstrating His compassion performing miraculous healings in the temple, restoring the blind and the lame. This contrast highlights Jesus’ heart for the hurting and His willingness to meet their needs. Even during confronting corruption, Jesus takes time to show love and care for those who seek Him.

Even children continue to praise Him, crying out, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” This further enrages the chief priests and scribes, who demand that Jesus silence them as they became indignant.

Yet Jesus responds with Scripture, affirming that God has ordained praise from the lips of children. Their rejection of Him highlights the contrast between those who recognize Jesus with childlike faith and those whose hardened hearts refuse to accept Him. He exposed their lack of understanding and faith.

The next morning Jesus was hungry, Jesus encounters a fig tree that, despite its leafy appearance, bears no fruit. He curses the tree, causing it to wither instantly. When His disciples express amazement, Jesus uses the moment to teach them about faith, saying, “If you have faith, and don’t doubt... even if you tell this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will be done.”

This symbolic act serves as a warning—just as the fig tree appeared healthy but was barren, so too were the religious leaders who outwardly practiced

religion but lacked true righteousness. God desires genuine faith and fruitfulness, not empty rituals.

Through the lesson of the fig tree, Jesus emphasizes:

- The importance of unwavering faith
- The power of prayer coupled with belief
- The potential for miraculous outcomes when we trust in God

The fig tree serves as an illustration of the consequences of fruitlessness and the necessity of living a life that bears spiritual fruit.

Matthew 21:23-32

<sup>23</sup> And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

<sup>24</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto them, **I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.**

<sup>25</sup> **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?

<sup>26</sup> But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

<sup>27</sup> 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.**

<sup>28</sup> **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.**

<sup>29</sup> **He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.**

<sup>30</sup> **And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.**

<sup>31</sup> **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.**

<sup>32</sup> **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.**

Jesus then faces a direct challenge from the chief priests and elders, who question His authority. They ask, "By what authority do you do these things?"

Instead of answering directly, Jesus counters with a question about John the Baptist's ministry, forcing them into a dilemma.

When they refuse to answer, Jesus declines to reveal His authority to them. This exchange highlights their unwillingness to acknowledge God's work, even when it is evident before them.

To further expose their hypocrisy, Jesus shares the Parable of the Two Sons. In the story, a father asks his two sons to work in his vineyard. The first son initially refuses but later obeys, while the second son agrees to go but never does. Jesus asks which son did the will of the father, and they reply, "The first." He then declares that tax collectors and prostitutes will enter God's kingdom before the religious leaders because they, like the first son, repented and followed God's will, while the leaders, like the second son, only gave lip service to obedience and did not truly believe.

Matthew 21:33-46

<sup>33</sup> Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

<sup>34</sup> And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

<sup>35</sup> And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

<sup>36</sup> Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

<sup>37</sup> But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

<sup>38</sup> But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

<sup>39</sup> And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

<sup>40</sup> When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> 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?

<sup>43</sup> Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

<sup>44</sup> And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

<sup>45</sup> And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

<sup>46</sup> But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

Jesus continues with another parable—the Parable of the Wicked Tenants. A landowner rents out a vineyard to tenants, but when he sends servants to collect the harvest, they beat and kill them. Finally, he sends his son, believing they will respect him, but they kill him too, hoping to take his inheritance.

Jesus asks what the landowner will do, they respond that he will destroy the wicked tenants and give the vineyard to others. Jesus then applies the parable to them, quoting Psalm 118: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

He warns that because they have rejected God’s Son, the kingdom will be taken from them and given to those who will bear its fruit. This pronouncement enrages the religious leaders even the more and they realized He is speaking about them, but they fear the crowd and do not act immediately.

Through these parables, Jesus exposes the religious leaders’ lack of genuine faith and their rejection of God’s messengers. He declares, “Hence I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it” ([Matthew 21:43, NKJV](#)). Jesus warns them of the consequences of their unbelief and the coming judgment upon those who reject Him as the cornerstone of God’s kingdom.

Matthew 21 encapsulates the tension between Jesus and the religious authorities, illustrating His divine authority and their growing hostility. It challenges us to consider the state of our own faith—are we like the barren fig tree, appearing religious but bearing no fruit? Are we like the second son, saying we will obey but failing to act? Or are we willing to humble ourselves, recognize Jesus as King, and truly follow Him?

This chapter reminds us that Jesus is not merely a teacher or prophet—He is the promised King, the cornerstone of God’s kingdom. Yet His rule is not marked by political power or force, but by humility, righteousness, and a call to true repentance. As we reflect on His triumphal entry, His cleansing of the temple, and His call to faith and obedience, we are invited to welcome Him into our lives not just with words, but with genuine transformation.

Let us be reminded of the significance of recognizing Jesus as the true authority and aligning our lives with His teachings. May we, as believers, strive to produce the fruit of the kingdom and follow Him with unwavering faith and obedience.

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