

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Matthew 21.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Matthew 21.

Topics.

- The King is coming.
- Jesus drives the money-changers out of the temple.
- My House shall be called a House of prayer.
- Jesus heals the blind and lame.
- A fig tree withers at Jesus' word.
- Parable of a man, his two sons and a vineyard.
- Parable of the man who planted a vineyard.
- The one who falls on this stone will be broken.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Jesus told the parable of the Kingdom of heaven being like a master of a house. He said the last will be first and the first last, he told the disciples he will be put to death and be raised on the third day and that those who serve Christ are to be servants of all. A mother asked if her two sons could sit at his side in the Kingdom, he healed two blind men and began to go to Jerusalem.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

The King is Coming.

Matthew 21:1-5 ----- ¹Now when they (Jesus and the apostles) drew near to Jerusalem and came to Beth-phage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." ⁴This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, ⁵"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.' "

How amazing is this!

Matthew tells us that Jesus riding in to Jerusalem on a donkey took place to fulfil what the prophet had spoken thousands of years prior to this event actually happening, that prophet was Zechariah.

The prophet Zechariah said: -

- Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zech. 9:9).

The King is coming continued: -

Matthew 21:6-9 ----- ⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

The crowds cite verse twenty six of Psalm one-hundred and eighteen which also links us to the following fabulous words contained in the rest of the Psalm. This is a beautiful display of the beauty and wonder of the Bible. The writer of the Psalm is calling the nation of Israel to rejoice over the victories the LORD has given them over their enemies, but contained within the language is an echo of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD. ¹⁸The LORD has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death. ¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. ²⁰This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. ²¹I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. ²²The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. ²³This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! ²⁶Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD. ²⁷The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us (Psalm 118:17-27).

Jesus drives the money-changers out of the Temple.

Matthew 21:10-13 ---- ¹⁰And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." ¹²And 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. ¹³He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

My House shall be called a House of Prayer is cited from: -

- These I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isaiah 56:7).

You make My House a den of robbers is cited from: -

- Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD (Jer. 7:11).

The religious leaders, the Pharisees, chief priests and scribes were no-doubt selling religious items at the entrance of the temple to the people as they entered.

NOTICE: Jesus was just as offended with those who were selling the items as he was with those who were buying them. This was a major event for the people of Jerusalem, the entire city would have seen and heard the crowds marching and praising the Lord as he rode toward the city on a lowly donkey.

The religious leaders, the Pharisees, chief priests and scribes would have been filled with great jealousy as they watched the crowds flock to this humble man as he approached the walls of Jerusalem. The crowds at this time still did not fully understand who Jesus was they only understood him to be a great prophet who lived at Nazareth.

NOTE: some think Jesus was a sinner, because he made a whip and drove out of the temple of God sheep and oxen and then poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables (John 2:15). But consider the following: in 2011 on a national T.V. News program a lady who was well into her retirement years was filmed racing across the street with no fear for her own life armed only with a handbag to stop five men with baseball bats robbing a jewellery store (they all fled).

This brave and courageous woman had such a strong love for justice and what was right that it overrode any concern for her own life. When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem on the colt and saw priests who should be doing the work of God

inflating prices of religious items and animals sold for sacrifices for their own gain and profit and oppressing and taking advantage of the poor and those who were seeking God he felt the same righteous anger as the elderly lady who drove the robbers away. Now what do you think? Would God call this type of anger sinful or righteous?

Jesus heals the Blind and Lame.

Matthew 21:14-16 ---- ¹⁴And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, ¹⁶and 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?"

Jesus cites the following verse from Psalm eight verse two: -

- Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger (Psalm 8:1-9).

Out of the mouth of babes and infants refers to the children, the common people and Gentiles as opposed to the religious leaders the Pharisees chief priests and scribes. The Jewish religious leaders of Jesus era would have had tremendous knowledge of the Scriptures yet it is the children and common people who praised the Lord and who were praised by him.

How amazing is this! God's ministers saw the wonderful miracles Jesus did and instead of being thrilled at such blessings coming to the sick and being overwhelmed by Jesus power to heal the lame and open blind eyes they are indignant, annoyed and angry at him. These were religious men who read and studied the biblical scrolls every day, they had enormous Scriptural knowledge and yet they had no idea what was important to the heart of God.

A Fig Tree Withers at Jesus' Word.

Matthew 21:17-22 ---- ¹⁷And leaving them (the chief priests and the scribes), he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there. ¹⁸In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. ¹⁹And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once. ²⁰When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" ²¹And 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. ²²And whatever you (the disciples) ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

Bethany: is at the Mount of Olives 1.5 miles from of Jerusalem.

THE STORY: Jesus went out of the city of Jerusalem and spent the night at Bethany then returned in the morning so the statement, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" (v19) is a reflection back on the conversation in the previous verses (the day before) in which Jesus rebuked the chief priests and scribes and told them that God would bring praise from the common people and the Gentiles thus the fig tree is a symbol of the chief priests and scribes who bore no fruit (kindness, mercy, compassion etc).

Jesus causing the fig tree to wither is exactly what he is about to do to the entire Levitical priesthood in a few days time. Christ death and resurrection totally destroyed the power and control of the chief priests and scribes. After the death and resurrection of Jesus no-one needs a priest or a temple any longer to enter into God's presence because Jesus now stands as everyone's eternal High Priest and mediator before God.

In the withering of the fig tree (a symbol of Israel) Jesus is graphically and spectacularly showing the disciples the power he has to completely bring to ruin something that does not produce fruit and therefore will not nourish those who look to it for food.

The fig tree is a picture of Israel's religious leaders who because of their own selfish ambition and lust for power could not produce godly fruit. Thus the reason Jesus says, "May no fruit (meaning followers) ever come from Israel's religious leaders again." The chief priest, Pharisees and scribes were in the ministry for their own selfish gain and not to serve others therefore it is impossible for them to produce any good fruit.

The mountain: in this story is the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes and the stronghold they had over the common people and the Gentiles. Jesus tells the disciples if they have faith in Christ and the Gospel they will destroy the stronghold Israel's religious leaders have over the people. This is exactly what the apostles did during their ministry in establishing the Lord Jesus Christ as the eternal High Priest for everyone who seeks after God.

The Chief Priests and the Elders Question Jesus Authority.

Matthew 21:23-27 ---- ²³And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴Jesus answered them (the chief priests and the elders) "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." ²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

NOTE: the Jews for fear of blaspheming the name of the LORD often used in their language the terms "Sent from Heaven" and "the Kingdom of Heaven" which simply means the same as "Sent from God" and "the Kingdom of God." Matthew uses the term "the Kingdom of Heaven" in his writings whereas Mark and Luke for the same verses use the term "the Kingdom of God."

The wisdom of Jesus: Jesus in his great wisdom does not answer the Pharisees question, but instead traps them by asking them a question they cannot answer.

Parable of a Man, his two Sons and a Vineyard.

Matthew 21:28-32 --- ²⁸"What do you (the chief priests and the elders) think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today. ²⁹And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. ³⁰And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. ³¹Which 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. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him (the common people and Gentiles). And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

The father: is a symbol of God.

The first son: is a symbol of the tax collectors and the prostitutes (Gentiles).

The second son: is a symbol of Israel.

The first son (the tax collectors and the prostitutes) (Gentiles) are asked to work in the fathers vineyard (God's Kingdom), but they refuse while the second son (Israel) is asked to work in the vineyard (God's Kingdom) and they agree, but the second son (Israel) changes his mind and did his own thing, while the first son (the tax collectors and the prostitutes) (Gentiles) changed their mind and went and worked in the vineyard (God's Kingdom).

The parable explained: prior to the flood God through Noah called the Gentiles (the first son), but they refused the call, so the LORD at Mount Sinai then called the entire Nation of Israel (the second son) and they covenanted to follow God, but

they refused John's message of repentance that leads to salvation, while the Gentiles repented and changed their minds to follow Christ, thus Jesus in this parable is saying the Gentiles did the will of the Father and will enter the Kingdom of God before the Jews.

Parable of the Man who Planted a Vineyard.

Matthew 21:33-42 --- ³³"Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. ³⁴When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. ³⁵And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' ³⁹And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹They 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." ⁴²Jesus 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 marvellous in our eyes'?"

Jesus cites the following verses from Psalm one hundred and eighteen: -

- The stone (echoing Christ) that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. ²³This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. ²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵Save us, we pray, O LORD! (Psalm 118:22-25).

David being a prophet in the following verses echoes the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and Israel's rejection of him.

- Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you (the chief priests and scribes) and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴And the one who falls on this stone (Jesus Christ) will be broken to pieces; and when it (Jesus Christ) falls on anyone, it will crush him." ⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet (Matt. 21:43-46).

The master: is a symbol of God.

The vineyard: is a symbol of God's Kingdom.

The fence: is a symbol of the Ten Commandments.

The tower: is a symbol of the temple of God.

The tenants: is a symbol of the Levitical Priesthood.

The other tenants: is a symbol of the Gentiles.

The servants: is a symbol of the prophets.

The son: is a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE STORY: God planted the people of Israel (tenants) in their own land (vineyard), established the temple of God (tower) and gave them the Ten Commandments to protect their society (fence) at harvest time the master (God) sent his servants (prophets) to collect the fruit, but they (the tenants) stoned the servants (prophets) so the master (God) sends his own son (Christ), but when the tenants (Israel) saw that he would be heir (King) they wanted the vineyard (Kingdom) for themselves so they cast the son (Christ) out and killed him. Now when the master (God) returns he will cast the tenants (Israel) out of the vineyard (Kingdom) and give it to other tenants (Gentiles) who will produce the fruits.

The one who Falls on this Stone will be Broken.

The corner stone: is a symbol of Christ.

The builders: are a symbol of the chief priests and scribes.

Falling on this stone means, being willing to surrender your life to Christ. When a person surrenders their life to the Lord Jesus Christ their pride has to crumble, but when the judgment of Christ (the stone) falls on anyone they will be crushed under it. In this parable Jesus is saying that the religious leaders of Israel's era rejected Christ, the chief cornerstone of God's entire Kingdom (the vineyard) and because of this, they will be crushed and cast out, but the Gentiles will inherit the Kingdom because though broken in pride they humbled themselves and accepted Christ the cornerstone.

NOTE: at this time the crowds did not fully understand who Jesus Christ was but they did recognize that he was a great prophet sent from God.

End