



Chapter 21: Jesus reaches Jerusalem

Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem (21:1-16)

Jesus and his disciples have now reached Bethphage on the Mount of Olives and the Lord prepares for his entry into Jerusalem. Two disciples were sent to a house nearby to collect a donkey for him to ride into the city. As events progress we are reminded that everything Jesus did was in obedience to his Father's will.



His journey fulfilled a prophecy from Zechariah 9:9.

"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."

When he entered the city all the people were excited, they recognised Jesus as a prophet and a king and thought their king had come to take his kingdom. This worried the religious leaders.

"And 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!'" (Matthew 21:9)

These words, shouted by the crowd, were written 1,000 years earlier in Psalm 118:25, 26. People recognised Jesus as the '*Son of David*' – the heir to King David's throne in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 7:12, 13). The expression '*Hosanna*', (meaning 'save now') was used as a shout of praise by the Jews. The people hoped that Jesus would save them at that time - 'save us now' - from the Romans who ruled over them at that time. Because he would not do this, a few days later the same crowd would shout "*Crucify him!*"

Jesus cleanses the Temple (21:12-16)

Rather than enjoy the praise of the people Jesus shocked everyone by throwing the traders out of the Temple. He was angry that the house of God was being used by people who were making money for themselves. The money changers exchanged foreign coins for those in which the Temple tax could be paid, but made sure they kept some for themselves. The Temple should have been a place for worshipping God, but it was a '*den of robbers*'. Jesus was quoting from Jeremiah 7:11, written 600 years before!

"Spoken by the prophet..."

The Gospel of Matthew reminds us that Jesus' life was dedicated to doing all that his Father had revealed through the prophets in the Old Testament. The phrase "*was spoken by the prophet*" occurs more times in Matthew's Gospel than anywhere else.

These quotations from the Old Testament help our understanding of the Gospel message.

Check out these references and see what they tell us of Jesus.

Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 2:17; 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 24:15; 27:9

The Fig Tree (21:18-22)

Jesus spent the night at Bethany, a village close to Jerusalem, probably in the home of Mary and her sister, Martha, of whom we read in Luke 10:38,39 and John 11:1.

In the morning he left Bethany and returned to Jerusalem. He saw a fig tree (verse 19) and expected to find it bearing fruit. He cursed the fig tree and it began to wither and die.

However, there is more to this incident. In Luke 13:6-9 Jesus told a parable about a fig tree being unfruitful. It referred to the nation of Israel who refused to accept the Gospel message. A fig tree with leaves usually had fruit as well, but not this one! Jesus used this as a parable of the nation of Israel. They seemed to





worship God enthusiastically, just as the fig tree displayed a lot of leaves. But like this fig tree they had no fruit; they did not display the qualities of Godly people and their worship was not genuine. By causing the fig tree to wither away, Jesus pointed to God's judgement which would come on those Jews who failed to accept him as their Saviour. Forty years later the Romans came against Jerusalem and destroyed it as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24

Christ's Authority (21:23-27)

The chief Priests and elders were always trying to trap Jesus with his words. They asked by what authority he was teaching and performing miracles. They wanted to trap him into admitting that he was doing these things on the authority of his heavenly Father. Then they could accuse him of blasphemy which would give them the excuse to condemn Jesus to death.

It was obvious that the wonderful miracles of Jesus were only possible if God was working through him. So Jesus asked a searching question of those who had challenged him. The chief priests and elders could not say that John's baptism had God's authority because they had not believed John. They were afraid to say this because most people thought John was one of God's prophets. So they had to give the feeble reply, 'We don't know'.

The Parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32)

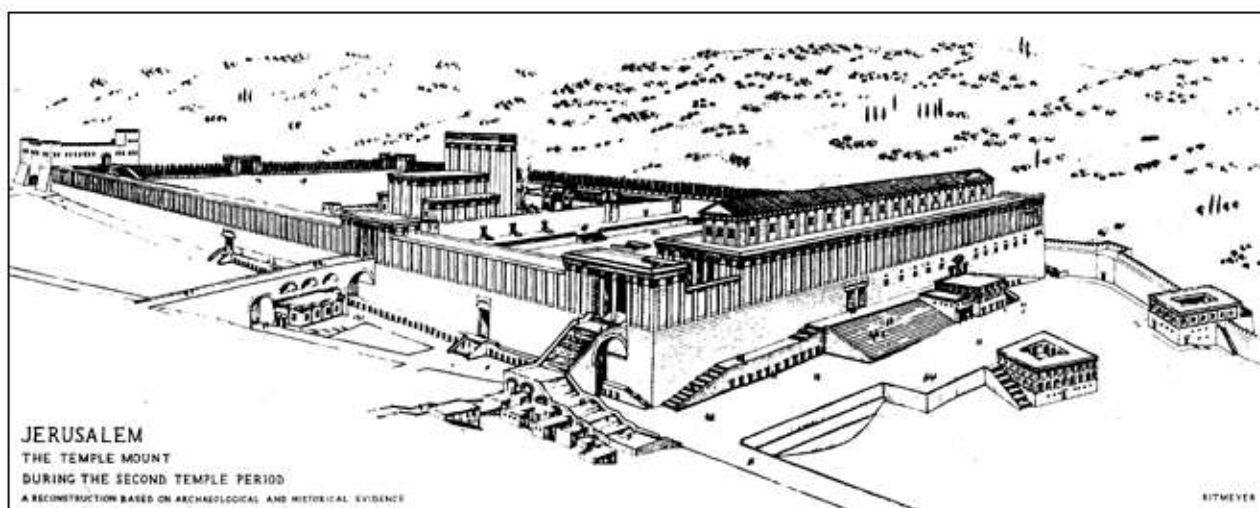
The Jewish leaders were just like the second son in this parable. They pretended to work in God's vineyard but they showed by their behaviour that they were rejecting God. They despised the lower classes and the tax collectors. The first son represents those who heard the call to repentance and realised they needed to repent when they heard John the Baptist's teaching. Later they followed Jesus as John instructed them.

The Parable of the Tenants (21:33-46)

This parable again shows how the Jewish leaders had failed. In the past Israel had been God's kingdom (see Lesson 9 of the 40 Lesson course), and the people had been called by Him to be His children. However they had rejected the prophets who had been sent to warn them, and Jesus knew that they were about to reject him. This opened up the way for the Gentiles (non-Jews) to have a place in God's Kingdom (verse 43).

Jesus quotes from Psalm 118:22, 23 which shows us that in spite of the Jews' rejection of Jesus, God's plan of salvation would triumph in the end.

The chief priests and Pharisees understood the parable because they realised that Jesus was speaking about them in these parables. Therefore they looked for a way to kill him but feared the multitude because the people accepted Jesus as a prophet.



Name	
Address	
Reference Number	
Tutor	

Answers to most questions can be found in the lessons or Bible passages given. Please write your answers on this question paper and return them in the envelope provided:

Questions on Chapter 19

- 1 Which verses show that Jesus believed that Genesis chapters 1&2 are true?
- 2 What is the great lesson Jesus taught about marriage?
- 3 What does Jesus mean by his words in Verse 14?
- 4 Verse 28 refers to the Lord Jesus sitting on his glorious throne in the future. From which capital city will he reign?
- 5 In your own words say how the Apostles will be rewarded when the Lord Jesus returns (verse 29)

Questions on Chapter 20

- 1a Why did some of the labourers grumble against the owner of the vineyard?
- 1b We would probably sympathise with those who had worked the longest and perhaps think the owner unfair. But what does the owner say?
- 1c The owner of the vineyard in the parable represents God (see Isaiah 5:7). If we think the judgement is unfair then it shows that our way of thinking is not God's way of thinking. Which verse in Isaiah 55 says this?

- 2a The disciples were annoyed that James and John wanted to be great. How can we be great – what did Jesus say?
- 2b How did Jesus show his greatness?
- 3 Copy out Psalm 89:35, 36. According to Acts 13:22, 23 who is the offspring (son) spoken of in these verses?

Questions on Chapter 21

- The crowds cheered Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem.
- 1a What did he do when he reached the Temple?
- 1b Why didn't the chief priests and scribes like what the children were shouting in the Temple area?

	Parables have hidden meanings. The table below refers to the parable in verses 33-46. Try to work out what each part represents. Some have been done for you.	
	Person/Object	What they represent
2a	The owner of the vineyard	
2b	The owner's servants	God's prophets
2c	The owner's son	
2d	The first tenants	Jews
2e	Other tenants (verse 41)	
2f	The vineyard (verses 41, 43)	
2g	The rejected stone	