

Matthew 21

ASVh with Comments

Summary. The events described in this chapter revolve around the Lord Jesus entering Jerusalem as the Most High King, a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. The events occur in Jerusalem and places around Jerusalem, and the Lord Jesus interacts with the disciples, crowds of people, children, and the leaders (the chief priests and the scribes). 1) As the prophet Isaiah prophesied, the Lord Jesus, the Most High King, entered Jerusalem on a beast of burden that is a colt of a donkey. The multitudes accepted the Lord Jesus as the Most High King, the people spread their cloaks on the ground, and all, including children, praised Him, shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David.” The Father sent the Holy Spirit to open people’s hearts to fulfill the prophecy. We all are born with the knowledge of the Most High King. The Holy Spirit stirred the calling in people’s hearts, so everyone recognized the Lord Jesus as the Most High King in unison. The Holy Spirit had opened the knowledge that the Father had put in the souls of humans even before they were born. 2) The Lord Jesus ministers in the temple in Jerusalem. Entering the temple, He cleanses the temple while showing hurt that people transformed the house of the Lord into a “den of robbers.” He heals the blind, the lame, and the sick, and the Holy Spirit puts praises in the children’s mouths to cry out loud, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” 3) The Lord Jesus teaches the disciples about faith using the fig tree lesson. As soon as the words came out of the mouth of the Lord, the disciples witnessed that the tree immediately withered. This fig tree lesson will be remembered by them to remind them that all things are possible by faith. 4) The chief priests and the elders of the people question the authority of the Lord Jesus in teaching and healing. The Lord Jesus doesn’t answer them immediately; instead, He asks them a question about John, the messenger of the Lord, which they do not answer. God does not lie, no matter the reason. Since they do not answer His question, the Lord Jesus does not give them a direct answer but instead tells them two parables. A) The parable of the Father and two sons. This parable tells them that the Father gives chances to everyone at the same time. But, each person’s response to the Father’s call will determine where each one will go. B) The parable of the master and the farmers. This parable tells them that the Father sent His servants, but they did not receive them. Ultimately, He sent His Son, but instead of accepting the Son, they plot against Him. They took Him out of the temple, mocked Him, and killed Him. The Lord Jesus tells them through this parable that after He is killed, the leadership will be shifted from humans to the Holy Spirit (See John 14:16-17).

21¹ And when they drew **near to** Jerusalem, and came **to** Bethphage, **to** the Mount of Olives, then **Jesus** sent two disciples,

Comments 21:1. Bethphage and Bethany were two small neighboring cities. People sometimes referred to these cities just by one name, Bethphage.

² saying **to** them, Go into the village **in front of** you, and **immediately you will** find a **donkey** tied, and a colt with her; **having untied** bring **to Me**.

Comments 21:2. The donkey and its colt were tied together. At that time, this was the way the mother and the baby were tied together to keep them calm. If you take the colt, the mother will follow. The disciples brought both of them to the Lord Jesus. The Lord would not separate the mother from her baby.

³ And if **anyone** says **anything to** you, **you** shall say, The **Lord** has need of them; **then immediately** he will send them.

⁴ **Then** this **came** to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken **by** the prophet, saying,

⁵ **Say to** the daughter of Zion,

Behold, **Thy King** comes **to you**,

Meek, and **mounted on** a **donkey**,

Even upon a colt the foal of a **beast of burden**.

Comments 21:5. “Daughter of Zion” refers to Israel as the children of God. “Thy King” refers to the Lord Jesus; He is the king of His children. The donkey is called “a beast of burden” because of its use at that time. Everything went on the back of the donkey; heavy, heavy loads will go on its back.

Q: What is the significance of the Lord Jesus entering Jerusalem riding on a colt of a donkey? **A:** This act was not only to fulfill the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9; the important word in this verse to pay attention to is meek (humble). The reason the Lord rode on a donkey's colt was to show humans how humble the Most High King must be, if the Most High King humbled Himself by sitting on an animal that is used for work. The Most High King who came on a beast of burden has been lifted high above all heaven and earth by the Father Himself.

Q: Why was the animal a colt of a donkey and not a mature donkey? **A:** The Lord will not use anything that man has used to enter the city of Jerusalem. The animal had to be pure and clean, such as a colt that no one had sat on. Riding a colt that no one has sat on before shows that even animals obey the Lord. Humans disobey, but the young colt obeyed the Lord; this can be viewed as a comparison.

⁶ Then the disciples went, and did even as **Jesus** directed them;

⁷ they brought the **donkey** and the colt, and put on them their garments; and **He** sat on them.

Comments 21:7. The donkey was tied with the colt; bring the colt, and the donkey will follow. No man would sit on two animals, and no man would normally sit on a colt, but at that time, people would sit on a donkey. The Lord will sit on a colt that no man has ever sat on before, as the Bible says (See Mark 11:2), and this explains which one of the animals the Lord Jesus used.

“And He sat on them.” “Them” refers to the garments that have been put on the donkeys. So, the Lord rode on the colt only, sitting on the garments that were put on the colt.

⁸ And the most part of the multitude spread their garments **on the road**; and others cut branches from the trees and spread them **on the road**.

Comments 21:8. This verse clearly shows how most people accept the difference in level between them and the Lord Jesus. Stepping on something above and below is what this action shows; by spreading their cloaks, they admit to being below, and they put the Lord Jesus above them and give Him the higher authority. We see that the majority of people accepted the first entrance of the Lord Jesus to the city; the people acknowledged the authority of the Lord Jesus as the Most High King.

⁹ Now the multitudes that went before **Him**, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the **Son of David**! Blessed is the **One coming** in the name of the **Lord**; Hosanna in the highest!

Comments 21:9. When the multitudes shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” this was to fulfill what the prophet was saying about the Christ (See Matthew 22:41-45).

“Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord.” To make the multitude come and worship the same way only the Holy Spirit can do. Without the Holy Spirit, they could not quote this verse and keep shouting. The Lord guided them to do the work and fulfill what is written in the Scriptures.

“Hosanna in the highest.” The expression is used by the crowd to glorify the Lord Jesus as He enters Jerusalem.

¹⁰ And **He** having entered into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this?

Comments 21:10. The same question comes from the hearts of the multitudes: “Who is this?” This verse shows the work of the Holy Spirit, who stirred up the multitudes to come to glorify the Lord as He entered Jerusalem. No prophet of the Lord will die outside Jerusalem (See Luke 13:33).

¹¹ And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, **Jesus**, from Nazareth of Galilee.

Comments 21:11. The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus shall be called a Nazarene (See Matthew 2:23). All that is written in the Scripture shall be fulfilled; the Father sent the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of the people to fulfill what it is written. How did the great multitude know the details about the Lord Jesus being a prophet from Nazareth (a very small town)? The word-of-mouth travels fast, but this is not gossip because it is the work of the Holy Spirit stirring people's hearts to the mighty coming of the Lord to meet people's needs; the Lord has come to help and not to condemn. And that is why they shouted, “Hosanna in the highest,” to glorify the One that comes in the name of the Lord, showing the hearts of people that accept the Lord Jesus.

¹² And **Jesus** entered into the temple, and **cast** out all **those selling** and **buying** in the temple, and He **overturned** the tables of the money changers, and the seats of **those selling** the doves;

¹³ and **He** says to them, It is written, **My** house **will** be called a house of prayer; but **you** make it a den of robbers.

Comments 21:12-13. These verses show more than anger; they show disappointment and pain. When people use the house of the Lord as a marketplace and not for worshiping, it makes the Lord feel hurt and disappointed. These are His own people, not the Gentiles who are doing this. What actions they are doing are not actions of

glorifying God; these are the actions of a marketplace not worshiping (they should sell their things outside of the temple grounds). Nowadays, what people do in the house of prayer is not much different from the ones here. The purpose of going is not for prayer but for meeting friends, but the first reason in the heart should be to go to the house of the Lord to praise the Lord.

“Den of robbers.” “Robbers” does not mean robbers in the way of the world, but rather robbers of glorifying God. These robbers rob straight the glory of the Lord; they emphasize human activities instead of God’s mercy. Today, we can also find these kinds of robbers in our churches. Many build big churches, and the question is if they are building them to glorify the Lord or to show off and make themselves important. When building like this, instead of pointing to the Lord, they take attention away from the Lord to the things around them, and this action is the robbers’ action.

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

¹⁵ **Now** the chief priests and the scribes **having seen** the **wonders** that **He** did, and the children crying **out** in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the **Son** of David, they were **indignant**,

Comments 21:15. “The wonders that He did” refers to the healings that the Lord Jesus performed.

“They were indignant.” This shows jealousy from the side of the priests and scribes.

¹⁶ and said **to Him**, **Do Thou** hear what these are saying? And **Jesus** says to them, **Yes**; did **you** never read,

Out of the mouth of **infants** and **nursing babies**,

Thou have **completed** praise?

Comments 21:16. In this verse, pay attention to the words “completed praise.” From the little children, the hearts that are clean and pure will praise the Lord with a clean heart. That is what the Lord prefers: praise the Lord as little children do, from within your heart and not from your head. The children hear straight from the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and that makes their mouths speak “completed praise.”

¹⁷ And **He** left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and lodged **in the open** there.

Comments 21:17. The Lord had a purpose in lodging outside Jerusalem to teach the disciples. He did not stay long in Bethany because His purpose was to travel and preach the Word.

¹⁸ Now in the morning as **He** returned to the city, **He** hungered.

¹⁹ And seeing a fig tree **along the road**, **He** came to it, and found nothing **on it**, **except** leaves only; and **He** says to it, **Never** let there be fruit from **you**. And immediately, the fig tree withered away.

Comments 21:18-19. What had happened to this fig tree, the disciples will benefit for their faith in the Word; do not say anything using the name of the Lord if you do not have faith. The disciples need to learn this fig tree lesson to build up their faith. The disciples at that time faced more troubles than what we are facing now. The fig tree lesson will stay with them to remind them that all things are possible by faith. As the words came out of the mouth of the Lord, the disciples could see that the tree immediately withered away. This lesson will help them as they go along in life because the Lord will not stay long with them. Even for people nowadays, for holding on to your faith, remember this fig tree and how it withered at once.

²⁰ And the disciples **having seen**, **marveled**, saying, How did the fig tree immediately wither away?

²¹ And answering, **Jesus** said to them, **Truly I** say to you, If **you** have faith, and **do not** doubt, **you will** not only do **this** of the fig tree, but even if **you may** say **to** this mountain, Be **you** taken **away** and **thrown** into the sea, it **will** be done.

Comments 21:21. People use this verse to test the Lord’s power. Asking in prayer and asking for greed is a different thing. This verse teaches faith in God, not faith in getting things. The faith in getting things, the Lord means, for example, we pray for the tree, and what do we expect inside of us, the tree to grow or the tree to make fruit? When we pray for the tree to grow, then we want the Lord’s mercy. But when we pray for the tree to make fruit, then the stomach is thinking, which is greed, and there is a different purpose in the prayers. Even if we have faith as big as a mountain, nothing will happen if the purpose of asking is wrong.

“And do not doubt.” Do not doubt when you come to ask something from the Lord. Most believers have this trouble; faith and doubt are two different things. You have faith in God, but you doubt yourself in receiving. If you have doubt inside of you, deep inside, you don’t believe in the God that you come to ask from, and you are not better than unbelievers.

²² And all things, whatever **you may** ask in prayer, believing, **you will** receive.

Comments 21:22. “All things, whatever.” This saying does not include prayers that go against God’s will and the nature of man. For example, you pray to win a lottery ticket; this is against God’s will. And, when cold weather comes, you ask to walk through the cold and not feel cold; this is against the nature of man.

²³ And **He having** come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came **to Him** when teaching, **saying**, By what authority **are Thou doing** these? And who gave **Thee** this authority?

Comments 21:23. “The chief priests and the elders of the people.” These people are the top leaders by human appointment but not by God’s appointment. This is all the pride of men; you have been chosen to have power, but someone else comes to show you power and make you see true power (See Verse 14), so you will feel your power being challenged.

“Came to Him when teaching, saying, By what authority are Thou doing these? And who gave Thee this authority?” For the person who can teach in the front, they all will call the Lord Jesus as a teacher. The Lord Jesus has the authority to be the teacher; He is already teaching in the front. The authority is His and His alone (See Verse 14). How can the students ask who gave Him the authority when He already is in the front having the authority? They (the leaders and the commoners) already accepted His authority by putting Him in the front. Only the rebellious students ask that question, and they are these ones “the chief priests and the elders of the people.”

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

Comments 21:24. Q: Why didn’t the Lord Jesus answer their question directly? **A:** Because the Lord knows their hearts. It doesn’t matter how many miracles He performs; the darkness of their hearts will cover their eyes. They see with their eyes, but they can’t perceive.

²⁵ The baptism of John, **from where** was it? From heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we **should** say, From heaven; **He** will say **to** us, Why then did **you** not believe him?

²⁶ **However**, if we **should** say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet.

Comments 21:25-26. “The baptism of John, from where was it?” **Q:** Why did the Lord Jesus ask them this question? **A:** The Lord wanted them to point out who John was for them. John is the messenger of the Lord, but they cannot accept it. John is the messenger of the Lord, and the Lord Jesus is the Lord; two different kinds of life, John one way, the Lord Jesus one way; however, in their eyes, neither way is right. Their reasoning shows clearly how their eyes perceive.

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.

²⁸ But what **do you** think? A man had two sons; and **having come** to the first, **he** said, Son, go work **today** in the vineyard.

Comments 21:28. This parable has two parts. The first part tells the story of the two sons listening to the Father. The second part shows the results of the mercy of the Father.

Q: What is the meaning of the characters in the parable? **A:** “A man” here stands for the Father. The “two sons” stand one for the Pharisees and the other for those who listen to John the Baptist’s message. The “work” in this verse means to follow and meditate on the commandments, do as the commandments say, and let the world see you following the commandments. Here, “vineyard” means the world.

²⁹ And **answering** he said, I will not; but **having** repented, he went.

³⁰ And **having** come to the second, **he** said likewise. And **answering** he said, **I**; but he did not go.

Comments 21:29-30. “Son, go work today in the vineyard ... I will not; ... I; ...” The Father is looking at two types of people. He gives all of them a chance at the same time. The response of each individual to the call will determine where each one will go. Each one turned out in a different way, but the Lord gave them both the same chance.

³¹ Which of the two did the will of the father? They say, The first. **Jesus** says **to** them, Truly **I** say **to** you, that the **tax collectors** and the **prostitutes** go before you into the kingdom of **God**.

Comments 21:31. They can make the assessment, but they don’t know how to bring it to use in their walk of following the Lord.

³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; however, the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; then you, having seen, did not even repent afterward to believe him.

Comments 21:32. This verse shows the plan of the Father for humans to come to the Lord. With the Father's mercy, not just for His own people, but for the whole world, the messenger has come and pointed out to the Savior of the world. It is an easy way for humankind, but humans want to be as great as God and ignore His message and deny the Savior. The chosen ones will listen to the message, but the outcasts will ignore the true message from the Father. Even now, the disobedient ones still ignore the message.

³³ Hear another parable: There was a man, a master of a house, who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to farmers, and traveled abroad.

Comments 21:33. The meaning of the characters and elements in the parable:

"Master" refers to the Father. "House" refers to the seen and the unseen world. "Who planted a vineyard" refers to the place to be for God's people, the Jews, and the chosen ones. "Set a hedge around it" means that the Lord put the guide and protection for His people. Imagine the Holy Spirit covering them with His wings; that is the fence for His people. Even today, all His children have a seal in their hearts to link with the Holy Spirit, and the wing of the Holy Spirit extends to that person. "Dug a winepress in it" refers to the procedure (the call from the Lord) to separate the election among His children, the election of who has specific duties in life to do for the Lord. "Built a tower" refers to the Word of God, all the regulations and the rules that have been written, and the Lord Jesus coming to point out the rule for all His chosen ones to follow that rule. Through the Lord Jesus, all have the same rule, and nobody can say I know the Lord more than another. All will know Him because of the same rule. "Rented it out to farmers" means that everything, the vineyard, the winepress, and the tower, have been leased. "Farmers" refers to the Jews and the chosen ones. "Traveled abroad" refers to the Father.

³⁴ Then when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the farmers, to receive his fruits.

Comments 21:34. "When the season of the fruit drew near" refers to the times when the "farmers" make mistakes, and they need to repent. "His servants" are the election that went through the winepress. "To receive his fruit" refers to receiving the ones who repent and glorify the Lord in their hearts, the ones who come to the point of feeling sorry and want to restart again with the Lord.

³⁵ And the farmers having taken his servants, indeed they beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

Comments 21:35. The Lord sends His angel to the chosen ones (His servants) to give the message; those then go to the farmers (the Jews and the chosen ones), and they have been mistreated.

³⁶ Again, he sent other servants more than the first, and they did to them in like manner.

Comments 21:36. This verse talks about what the humans did to the Lord's servants. The Lord sent them to serve the humans, but they killed some, beat some, and stoned some, but the Lord never gives up; He keeps sending more of His servants. The Father's love is greater than His anger.

³⁷ Then afterward he sent to them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

Comments 21:37. "Then afterward." The Bible often says that His servants have been mistreated in many ways. But the Lord never gives up on us. Here, it reminds us how much the Father cares for humans; He sent His only begotten Son to save the whole world. But we know from the Bible what the humans did to His Son; it is written as proof for all. The sinful human nature did not want to obey. But, it will never happen again; that was the first and the last time because there is only one begotten Son to come and save us. There is no other way for mankind to come to the Father except through His Son Jesus.

³⁸ But the farmers, having seen the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take possession of his inheritance.

Comments 21:38. "But the farmers, having seen the son." Relating to this verse, there are many places in the Bible where they recognized the Lord Jesus, but they tried to avoid using the term Son; they just called Him a prophet. They recognized the authority in Him but could not accept Him as the Son of God; the most they give is as a prophet. They know by heart who the Lord Jesus is, but because of tradition, they couldn't publicly say who He is

(See Mark 2:27). If anyone accepts someone as the Son of God, that person must be stoned; not the person who accepts Him as a Son in their hearts, but the person who says publicly that He is the Son of God.

“Come, let us kill him, and take possession of his inheritance.” Instead of accepting the Son, they plot against the Son. When they talk about His inheritance, it has further meaning. Because of the Lord Jesus’ fame, miraculous works, and His authority, they want that fame to go to themselves as the ones with that power and authority. All they really want is to try to make it as they are the ones who teach the Lord Jesus to do the miracles by their training, and in this way, they will still keep the power to control the people. The Lord has given humans wisdom, and they use that wisdom to fight Him instead of glorifying Him. Humans use their wisdom to try to make themselves to be like the Lord; this shows the sinful nature of humans. But, without His Son, they will never be able to have the Father’s eyes on them again. Forgiveness comes only by faith alone in His Son, not by works.

³⁹ And **having taken him, they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him.**

Comments 21:39. When they crucified the Lord Jesus, they took Him out of the temple to move Him further outside because they believed that if He was far from the temple, this would calm down the people. The Lord Jesus has many followers, and the way to make fewer problems for themselves is to discredit Him first, then kill Him. By mocking the Lord Jesus in public and putting Him to shame, His followers would be discouraged and back off; then, afterward, they could do everything to Him. They would have fewer problems with the people if they disgrace Him first in public, but the Lord Jesus is willing to take everything to fulfill the Father’s plan. That is why the Lord Jesus is favored by the Father Himself, for He, being God, is willing to be disgraced by the creatures He created.

⁴⁰ When therefore the **master** of the vineyard shall come, what will he do **to** those **farmers**?

⁴¹ They say to **Him, Evil people**, He will **grievously** destroy **them**, and will **rent** out the vineyard **to** other **farmers**, who will **give to** him the fruits in their seasons.

Comments 21:40-41. From this point on, the leadership will shift from humans to the Holy Spirit (See Holy Spirit given in John 14:16, 26 and Acts 1:12-15). And this will not be pleasing to those who believe they are in control. With this power shift, fights will start, within and from outside. The Bible tells us in many places that the authority belongs only to one King who created all. Only one King exists who has control over all, the King who created all things, not the created ones being the king. And now the Holy Spirit will administer the leadership to whoever He pleases, to the ones who are worthy to do the work, not based on looks but on the heart.

⁴² **Jesus says to them**, Did **you** never read in the scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected,

This became the head of the corner;

This was from the **Lord**,

And it is marvelous in our eyes?

Comments 21:42. This verse tells about the Lord Jesus Himself conquering all; all things are created through Him, and He is above all. “Builders” refers to the Jews (His people). “The stone” refers to the Son of God (the Lord Jesus). “The head of the corner” or “the cornerstone” refers to the Lord Jesus. The Jews rejected the Lord Himself. After being rejected, He is the most important because everything is based on the cornerstone, and the fundamental belief and faith are built on this stone.

⁴³ Therefore, **I say to you that** The Kingdom of **God will** be taken away from you, and **it will** be given to a **people producing** the fruits thereof.

⁴⁴ And **the one** that **falls** on this stone **will** be broken; but on whomever it shall fall, it will **grind him to powder**.

Comments 21:43-44. This paragraph talks about the love of the Father for His people, the Jews. Though they keep rejecting Him, yet they are not forgotten; the Lord will always gather them back together. They will be scattered around, but the Lord will gather them back because they are His people, which will never change regardless of what they do; they are His children. They did good work for the Gentiles by rejecting the Lord. The Lord has come calling the Gentiles to do only the work that His own people do not want to do, to proclaim the Lord and that He will be back again for all the people, not just for His people alone. The Lord will return again. The Gentiles should remember that because of the children falling, they themselves will proclaim the Word of the Lord.

“And the one that falls on this stone will be broken” still refers to His people, the Jews; because they fall in this rejection (“... builders rejected”), they are scattered around (“will be broken”).

“But on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder” means that when this knowledge (about the cornerstone) falls on any of His chosen ones, their own people will reject them (the Christian ones will be made to suffer by their own people).

⁴⁵ And the chief priests and the Pharisees **having** heard **His** parables, they perceived that **He** speaks **about** them.

Comments 21:45. This verse shows that the Pharisees and chief priest feel guilty in their hearts.

⁴⁶ And **seeking** to lay hold **of Him**, they feared the multitudes, because they took **Him as** a prophet.

Life and Faith Applications. 1) The knowledge about God is put in our souls even before we are born, and the Lord gives a chance to all at the same time. What we do with this knowledge here on earth will determine where we go at the end of our lives. 2) We need to remember the fig tree lesson, how the tree withered as the words came out of the Lord Jesus’ mouth. The Lord Jesus has authority over everything. 3) Pray with faith, but do not use greed when you pray. 4) After the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, the leadership of His children was shifted from humans to the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit administers the duties to whoever He pleases.