# Lesson 22 Matthew Chapter 21 Growing Hostility toward Jesus

Life in Christ: When did you feel closest to Our Lord this week?

1. Changing money to the special currency needed to pay the Temple tax and selling “unblemished” animals for sacrifice since animals brought by worshipers were inspected and invariably found to be flawed was a major money making concern for the Sadducees. Mark’s Gospel shows the true source of their indignation. Jesus is, of course, aware of this. Do you think that the cleansing of the Temple together with the triumphal entry into Jerusalem were deliberate acts by Jesus to provoke the ruling Jewish authorities into taking actions that would lead to His death? Who is really in control?

Matthew 21:12-17

12 Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those engaged in selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves.

13 And he said to them, “It is written:

‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’

but you are making it a den of thieves.”

14 The blind and the lame approached him in the temple area, and he cured them.

15 When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wondrous things he was doing, and the children crying out in the temple area, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant

16 and said to him, “Do you hear what they are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes; and have you never read the text, ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nurslings you have brought forth praise’?”

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

Mark 11:18

18 The chief priests and the scribes came to hear of it and were seeking a way to put him to death, yet they feared him because the whole crowd was astonished at his teaching.

B In this short passage, Jesus brings to fulfillment four Old Testament prophesies. Do you think Jesus was deliberately taking actions that would demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecies? If so, do you think that is in any way “cheating?”

Isaiah 56:7

57 Them I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples

Jeremiah 7:11

11 Has this house which bears my name become in your eyes a den of thieves? I have seen it for myself!—oracle of the LORD.

Psalm 8:2-3

2 O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth! I will sing of your majesty above the heavens

3 with the mouths of babes and infants

Wisdom 10:20-21

20 They sang of your holy name, Lord, and praised in unison your conquering hand,

21 Because Wisdom opened the mouths of the mute, and gave ready speech to infants

C The version of the Psalm which Jesus quotes is from the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX) which was the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures begun in the mid 200s BC and completed in 130 BC It is the basis of the Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, Syriac, and other Early Christian Old Testament. It includes the “deuterocanonical” books of the Old Testament such as Wisdom quoted by Jesus in this passage. How does Jesus’ quotation from these books affect your understanding of the Church including these books in the Catholic Bible with full Scriptural authority?

D If you were to replace the word “Wisdom” in Wisdom 10:20 with a name, what name would you use and why?

1. At first glance, it may appear that Jesus is being petulant. But, since that would be out of character for the divine Son of God, because the prophets often resorted to outlandish demonstrations (see Ezekiel 5:1-2) of their prophesies and because a fig tree was often a symbol for Israel in the Old Testament, what do you think Jesus’ real message is

Matthew 21:18-22

18 When he was going back to the city in the morning, he was hungry.

19 Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went over to it, but found nothing on it except leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again.” And immediately the fig tree withered.

20 When the disciples saw this, they were amazed and said, “How was it that the fig tree withered immediately?”

21 Jesus said to them in reply, “Amen, I say to you, if you have faith and do not waver, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done.

22 Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.”

Ezekiel 5:1-2

1 As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword and use it like a barber's razor, passing it over your head and beard. Then take a set of scales and divide the hair you have cut.

2 Burn a third in the fire, within the city, when the days of your siege are completed; place another third around the city and strike it with the sword; the final third strew in the wind, and pursue it with the sword.

1 Kings 5:5

5 Thus Judah and Israel lived in security, every man under his vine or under his fig tree from Dan to Beer-sheba, as long as Solomon lived.

1. The Jewish “religious authorities” ask Jesus about the source of His authority. The NABRE footnote indicates the “Jewish authorities” were incapable (or unwilling) of speaking with authority, so Jesus refused to answer. What are the answers to the two questions: source of Jesus authority and “Was it [John’s baptism] of heavenly or of human origin?”

Matthew 21:23-27

23 When he had come into the temple area, the chief priests and the elders of the people approached him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?”

24 Jesus said to them in reply, “I shall ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I shall tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 Where was John’s baptism from? Was it of heavenly or of human origin?” They discussed this among themselves and said, “If we say ‘Of heavenly origin,’ he will say to us, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’

26 But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we fear the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet.”

27 So they said to Jesus in reply, “We do not know.” He himself said to them, “Neither shall I tell you by what authority I do these things.

NABRE Footnote on Matthew 21:27

The religious authorities claim ignorance of the origin of John’s baptism, they show themselves incapable of speaking with authority; hence Jesus refuses to discuss with them the grounds of his authority.

The Parable of the Two Sons.

1. Jesus continues His questions to the Jewish “religious authorities,” allowing them to dig themselves into an ever deepening hole. Keep in mind that a parable can cover a wide range of teaching genre, strictly speaking a parable has a single point and should not be picked apart for additional meanings as would be proper for an allegory (such as the Parable [Allegory] of the Sower.) Jesus clearly lays out the main point. Can you see, in Jesus conclusion, vs 31-32, a reflection of your own religious journey to faith? What were some of the steps of your journey?

Matthew 21:28-32

28 “What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’

29 He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards he changed his mind and went.

30 The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, ‘Yes, sir,’ but did not go.

31 Which of the two did his father’s will?” They answered, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you.

32 When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

The Parable of the Tenants

1. A. This parable has many characteristics of an allegory. What do the underlined represent:

Matthew 21:33-41

33 “Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey.

34 When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce.

35 But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned.

36 Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way.

37 Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, ‘They will respect my son.’

38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.’

39 They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

40 What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?”

41 They answered him, “He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times.”

Landowner? Vineyard? Hedge?

Winepress? Tower? Tenants?

Vintage time? Produce? Servants?

Son/heir? When he comes? Wretched death?

B What is the overall point/message of the parable?

1. Jesus quotes from Psalm 118:22–23 and Isaiah 28:16 and Acts 4:11 repeat Jesus’ quote From Jesus’ quote and who or what is:

Matthew 21:42

42 Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

by the Lord has this been done,

and it is wonderful in our eyes’?

Acts 4:10-12

10 It was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed.

11 He is ‘the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.’

12 There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.”

Builders? Cornerstone? Building?

1. Who will the Kingdom of God be taken from and who will it be given to?

Matthew 21:43-46

43 Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.

44 The one who falls on this stone will be dashed to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he was speaking about them.

46 And although they were attempting to arrest him, they feared the crowds, for they regarded him as a prophet.