

MATTHEW CHAPTER 21 New Century Version

1 As Jesus and his followers were coming closer to Jerusalem, they stopped at Bethphage at the hill called the Mount of Olives. From there Jesus sent two of his followers

2 and said to them, "Go to the town you can see there. When you enter it, you will quickly find a donkey tied there with its colt. Untie them and bring them to me.

3 If anyone asks you why you are taking the donkeys, say that the Master needs them, and he will send them at once."

4 This was to bring about what the prophet had said:

5 "Tell the people of Jerusalem, 'Your king is coming to you. He is gentle and riding on a donkey, on the colt of a donkey.'"

6 The followers went and did what Jesus told them to do.

7 They brought the donkey and the colt to Jesus and laid their coats on them, and Jesus sat on them.

8 Many people spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

9 The people were walking ahead of Jesus and behind him, shouting, "Praise to the Son of David! God bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise to God in heaven!"

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, all the city was filled with excitement. The people asked, "Who is this man?"

11 The crowd said, "This man is Jesus, the prophet from the town of Nazareth in Galilee."

12 Jesus went into the Temple and threw out all the people who were buying and selling there. He turned over the tables of those who were exchanging different kinds of money, and he upset the benches of those who were selling doves.

13 Jesus said to all the people there, "It is written in the Scriptures, 'My Temple will be called a house for prayer.' But you are changing it into a 'hideout for robbers.'"

14 The blind and crippled people came to Jesus in the Temple, and he healed them.

15 The leading priests and the teachers of the law saw that Jesus was doing wonderful things and that the children were praising him in the Temple, saying, "Praise to the Son of David." All these things made the priests and the teachers of the law very angry.

16 They asked Jesus, "Do you hear the things these children are saying?" Jesus answered, "Yes. Haven't you read in the Scriptures, 'You have taught children and babies to sing praises'?"

17 Then Jesus left and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

18 Early the next morning, as Jesus was going back to the city, he became hungry.

19 Seeing a fig tree beside the road, Jesus went to it, but there were no figs on the tree, only leaves. So Jesus said to the tree, "You will never again have fruit." The tree immediately dried up.

20 When his followers saw this, they were amazed. They asked, "How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?"

21 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will be able to do what I did to this tree and even more. You will be able to say to this mountain, 'Go, fall into the sea.' And if you have faith, it will happen.

22 If you believe, you will get anything you ask for in prayer."

23 Jesus went to the Temple, and while he was teaching there, the leading priests and the older leaders of the people came to him. They said, "What authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

24 Jesus answered, "I also will ask you a question. If you answer me, then I will tell you what authority I have to do these things.

25 Tell me: When John baptized people, did that come from God or just from other people?" They argued about Jesus' question, saying, "If we answer, 'John's baptism was from God,' Jesus will say, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'

26 But if we say, 'It was from people,' we are afraid of what the crowd will do because they all believe that John was a prophet."

27 So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Jesus said to them, "Then I won't tell you what authority I have to do these things.

28 "Tell me what you think about this: A man had two sons. He went to the first son and said, 'Son, go and work today in my vineyard.'

29 The son answered, 'I will not go.' But later the son changed his mind and went.

30 Then the father went to the other son and said, 'Son, go and work today in my vineyard.' The son answered, 'Yes, sir, I will go and work,' but he did not go.

31 Which of the two sons obeyed his father?" The priests and leaders answered, "The first son." Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you do.

32 John came to show you the right way to live. You did not believe him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. Even after seeing this, you still refused to change your ways and believe him.

33 "Listen to this story: There was a man who owned a vineyard. He put a wall around it and dug a hole for a winepress and built a tower. Then he leased the land to some farmers and left for a trip.

34 When it was time for the grapes to be picked, he sent his servants to the farmers to get his share of the grapes.

35 But the farmers grabbed the servants, beat one, killed another, and then killed a third servant with stones.

36 So the man sent some other servants to the farmers, even more than he sent the first time. But the farmers did the same thing to the servants that they had done before.

37 So the man decided to send his son to the farmers. He said, 'They will respect my son.'

38 But when the farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This son will inherit the vineyard. If we kill him, it will be ours!'

39 Then the farmers grabbed the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

40 So what will the owner of the vineyard do to these farmers when he comes?"

41 The priests and leaders said, "He will surely kill those evil men. Then he will lease the vineyard to some other farmers who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

42 Jesus said to them, "Surely you have read this in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected became the cornerstone. The Lord did this, and it is wonderful to us.'

43 "So I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away

from you and given to people who do the things God wants in his kingdom.

44 The person who falls on this stone will be broken, and on whomever that stone falls, that person will be crushed."

45 When the leading priests and the Pharisees heard these stories, they knew Jesus was talking about them.

46 They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the people, because the people believed that Jesus was a prophet.