



Matthew 21

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Tape #8020
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn to Matthew's gospel chapter twenty-one, fascinating chapter.

And when they drew near to Jerusalem, were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, (21:1)

Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and there you will find a donkey that is tied, and the colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. (21:2)

And if any man says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and immediately he will send them. (21:3)

All of this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, (21:4)

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting on a donkey, and a colt the foal of the donkey. (21:5)

Here again, Jesus, I believe, is showing His miraculous knowledge and understanding of things. You remember back in the beginning of His ministry when Philip came to Nathaniel and told him that he had found the Messiah, and he brought, he said, Is Jesus of Nazareth, he said, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? He said, Come and see. So when Nathaniel came to Jesus, Jesus said to him, Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no guile. Nathaniel said, How do you know me? And He said, When you sitting under the fig tree, when Philip saw you or called you, I saw you. He said, You are the Messiah. Jesus said, You believe just because I said I saw you... wait around, fellow, you'll see a lot more. But this knowledge that Jesus had, exercising this divine knowledge, as He tells the disciples the exact corner upon which they will find this donkey tied with its colt. Told them what the owners would say, told them how to respond and He said he'll let them come. And so they went as He had commanded and they found as He had said, and they brought the donkey and the little colt to Jesus.

And thus, as Matthew points out, an important prophecy was fulfilled, found in Zechariah chapter nine where he said, "Rejoice, you daughters of Jerusalem; shout for joy: for your King cometh unto thee: but he is lowly, he is sitting on a donkey." (Zechariah 9:9) Not only was that prophecy fulfilled, but according to the prophecy of Daniel, from the time the commandment would go forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, to the coming of the Messiah the Prince, would be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens or 483 years. The commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in 445 B.C. Four hundred and eighty-three years later, corresponds to this time now.

Sir Robert Anderson in his book, *The Coming Prince*, does a masterful job in research showing that the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem actually was given on March the 14th, 445 B.C. And because Daniel was prophesying during the Babylonian era and they were using the Babylonian calendar of 360 days, he transposed the 483 years of 360 day-years and it gives you 173,280 days. And so Jesus made His triumphant entry on the sixth of April, according to the Jewish calendar, in 32 A.D. and it works out exactly mathematically to the day.

It is interesting that the Psalm that was declaring the coming of the Messiah also, Psalm 118, in this a hundred and eighteenth Psalm, where it says, "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," that section of the Psalm concerning the Messiah begins with, "This is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." And then it goes on to "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." So three important prophecies of the Old Testament. The King is coming, He is lowly, riding on a donkey, He will come 173,880 days after the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and they will be shouting "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the King." And then, of course, in that 118th Psalm, it said, "But the stone would be refused by the builders." And so the rejection of Jesus according to Psalm 118.

It is interesting that when Jesus made this entry into Jerusalem, that as He looked at the city, He wept

over it and Luke's gospel tells us that He cried and He said, "O Jerusalem, if you had only known the things that belong to your peace in this thy day," special day, this is the day the Lord has made. If you only knew it in this thy day, but it's hid from your eyes. And then He predicted the judgment and the destruction of Jerusalem that would take place by the Roman army in forty years. And it, of course, did happen just as Jesus predicted within the forty-year period.

So thus the prophecies were fulfilled. This is a momentous day in the history of man, really, it's the day that Israel had looked forward to from the beginning, the day of God's promise, the day of salvation, the day the King would come, the promised Messiah. And they'd been looking forward to this day. How tragic that when the day came, they missed it. The prophet Zechariah said, "Tell ye the daughters of Sion, behold, the King cometh unto thee; meek, and sitting on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, (21:6)

And they brought the donkey, and the colt, and they put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. (21:7)

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and put them in the path. (21:8)

And the multitudes that went before, and followed, cried, saying, Hosanna [or save now] to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. (21:9)

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all of the city was moved, saying, Who is this? (21:10)

The word translated "moved" there, is the same Greek word from which we get our English word, "seismic, earthquake." The whole place was moved, it was shaken. They said, Who is this?

And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. (21:11)

The other gospels tell us how that the Pharisees, when they heard them shouting "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," recognizing that that was prophesied of the Messiah, they said, Lord, quiet your disciples, that's blasphemous. And Jesus answered, You remember I tell you that if they would hold their peace, these stones immediately would cry out.

So Jesus went into the temple of God,

And according to Mark's gospel, this was the next day. There seems to be a little bit of confusion here because Matthew puts the cursing of the fig tree on the morning, as He returned to the city, Mark puts the cursing of the fig tree together with the going then into the temple and cleansing it. So just what the exact sequence is, we don't know. But Jesus went into the temple and this could have been on the following day when He cursed the fig tree, that's the order that Mark has it. If it was all perfectly in line, you'd say, Oh, they were in collusion, they all got together and they planned it all out, look how perfect it is. The very fact that it isn't in the same order exactly shows that they weren't copying each other, nor did they get together in collusion on the story. They are each of them bearing witness to the story as they recalled it and as they saw it and as they remembered it. "So Jesus went into the temple of God,"

and He cast out all of them that sold and bought in the temple, He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, (21:12)

As we mentioned this morning, there was quite a profitable little business going on in the temple precincts. They had these concessions where they sold certified animals, doves, and offer sacrifice. When you brought a sacrifice to the temple to offer to God, the priest would examine the sacrifice to make certain there were no flaws in the sacrifice. You couldn't offer to God anything that was defective in any way. God didn't want defective sacrifices. Now we remember a period in their history where they were bringing "roadkill." And God said, I don't want it. And so the sacrifice had to be perfect. So the priest would examine the sacrifices that were brought and if they were not purchased with the little certificate, certified, banded, this has been approved by the Rabbis and all, they would for the most part just reject them. They would search and they would then point out some flaw and say you can't offer this to God. You'll have to go out there and buy one of the doves out there in these concessions. You could buy a dove out on the street for just a few cents. But from these concessions, they were twelve, fifteen, twenty bucks. So they were gouging the people who were wanting to worship God, wanting to offer a sacrifice to God. They were gouging them, overcharging them horrendously. It was a racket.

The temple would not accept in the offering Roman coinage, they declared it was unclean. If you wanted to give to God, you would have to give the temple shekel. And the only place you could get the temple shekel was at the moneychanger there within the temple precincts. And again, they would charge an exorbitant rate of exchange. For a dollar in Roman coinage, you get about fifty cents worth of the temple shekel. And they were ripping the people off. It made Jesus angry to see them taking advantage of people who were desiring to serve the Lord and profiteering off of that desire to worship God. It angered Jesus. Anytime a person seeks to profit off of the desire of people to worship God, you can be sure that it makes Him upset, it angers Him. They were taking that which really should have been God's. People were desiring to offer to God but they were profiting off of it. According to Josephus, the booths, these concessions were owned by the family of the high priest. And so it was an internal kind of a thing. They had become extremely wealthy by taking advantage of the people and their spiritual desire to know and worship God. "So Jesus went into the temple of God, and he cast out all of them that were selling and buying in the temple, and He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that were selling the doves," (21:12)

And He said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you've made it a den of thieves. (21:13)

And then we see something extremely beautiful. In the midst of these scattered tables, in the midst of the disarray as Jesus had driven out the animals that they had and all, and overturned the tables, we read,

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. (21:14)

This is what the temple was to be about, this is what God desire that people could come into the temple, not be ripped off, but could be touched by God and healed by God. And we see Jesus really, this is the purpose. You've made My Father's house a den of thieves. And as He drove them out, then the purpose of the temple was fulfilled as the blind and the lame came and He healed them there in the temple. I love the contrast there. It just thrills me.

And when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did,

That is, the healing of the... There probably was something in their heart that I think was drawn to that and yet, greed and avarice had so taken control, there were probably mixed emotions. They saw the wonderful things that He did, and as He was there,

the children were calling out to Him, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David;

Salvation to the Son of David, the little children. What a beautiful scene that must have been! Here is the Messiah, He's standing in His temple. He said, the scripture said, It is written, My house... the Messiah is now in His house. They've turned it into a den of thieves but He has driven them out and now He is in the house of God, there fulfilling the purposes in healing those that were in need. And the little children saying, "Hosanna to the son of David." Salvation, save now. But when they saw this, that is, the chief priests and scribes,

they were sore displeased, (21:15)

They were angry.

And they said to Jesus, Do you hear what they are saying? And Jesus said unto them, Yes; have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (21:16)

Yes, I hear them. Haven't you read the scripture? Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise?

And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there. (21:17)

Now in the morning as he returned to the city, he was hungry. (21:18)

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and He said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. (21:19)

There are some who find fault with Jesus for cursing this fig tree because it had no fruit. It had leaves but no fruit. Now it is interesting that with the fig tree, they have what they call the first ripe fig and they actually appear before the leaves. I have a fig tree in my backyard and it is just now breaking out with leaves, but I have a great fig tree in that it does have an abundance of what they call the first ripe figs. And

really they are better than the later figs. The first ripe figs become fully ripe in June. Then you don't get your second crop until around August or so. But my tree is full of first ripe figs. Some of them are quite large at the time, and it is interesting that the time of year that Jesus came to the fig tree is coincident with the time of year right now. In fact, on the Julian or Gregorian calendar, the Sunday the 10th of April was the Sunday that Jesus made His triumphant entry. And so it corresponds exactly, today is Sunday, April the 10th and though in the Jewish calendar it was April... it was April 6th on the Julian calendar but it was April 10th on the Jewish calendar which means that He was crucified on the 14th, the day of Passover.

So it's interesting that my fig tree has figs and though they are not ripe, they would be edible for someone who is really hungry. If there are no figs on it, the leaves are already there, it means it's not bearing fruit. The fig should be there if it is a fruit-bearing tree. Now the whole issue, as far as God is concerned, is that we bear fruit, that's the purpose of bearing fruit. And the fig tree is symbolic through the scripture of the nation of Israel. And the cursing of the barren fig tree that is not bearing fruit is a symbolic action as much as anything else. Here is Israel not bearing fruit and they are to be cursed. They're to wither and die. And so it was actually a picture of what was going to happen to the nation of Israel that was not bringing forth fruit. Here is the Master coming to the tree desiring fruit. Hungry for fruit, He finds none. He doesn't find it in the nation of Israel, and the rest of the chapter is going to deal with the subject of the desire for fruit. And how that the nation that does not bring forth fruit will be rejected and the vineyard will be given to a nation that will bring forth fruit. So the whole part of this chapter is tied together, the fig tree that Jesus said, Let no man... They had leaves, interesting, it's like a lot of people, there's a lot of show but there's no fruit. There are the leaves, there's the appearance of life but there's no fruit, leaves only.

And so presently, right while they were watching, the fig tree just withered. Branches flipped over and the thing just died.

And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, and they said, Look, How that thing just withered away! (21:20)

They marvelled at the instant withering of the tree as Jesus pronounced upon it that curse.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. (21:21)

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (21:22)

What an extremely broad promise that Jesus gives to whom? Who's He talking to? Was He talking to the multitudes? No, He was talking to His disciples. It's important to know that and to note that, because this promise that Jesus is giving is not just a broad promise to anybody concerning prayer. It is to a specific group, His disciples; and what does it take to be a disciple? "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." So that the man who has denied himself isn't going to try to use this faith to put a Mercedes in his driveway. He's not going to use this for his own enrichment, or he will be as bad as the chief priests who were using the concessions to sell the certified animals for their own enrichment.

This promise is only to those who have renounced the self life, who have denied self, have taken up the cross to follow Jesus. And oh, the power that God has given and made available to those who are fully aligned with Him. Not zealous for their own ambitions but zealous for the kingdom of God. The prophet came to Asa, the king in Second Chronicles chapter fifteen or sixteen there, and he said, Don't you realize that the eyes of the Lord are going to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him; those who have denied themselves and have taken up their cross to follow Him. God's looking for those people that He might show Himself strong on their behalf, because their desires are for the work of God and the kingdom of God and not for self.

And when he was come into the temple,

It's interesting, came right back to the temple where He had cleansed the thing, when He came into the temple,

the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching,

Now He is being challenged by the religious authorities. And they had the right to do that because they were in charge of the temple, in charge of the worship,

and they said to Jesus, By what authority do you do these things?

They're challenging, Who authorized you to upset those tables and all yesterday?

who gave you this authority? (21:23)

By what authority do You do it and who gave You the authority?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell me, I will tell you... (21:24)

The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why didn't you then believe him? (21:25)

If we say, It was of men; then the people will be angry with us because they all believe John was a prophet. (21:26)

Catch 22.

So they answered Jesus, and said, We can't tell you. So he said to them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things. (21:27)

He was doing it by the same authority that John was ministering, you see. If you won't accept John's authority, you're not going to accept the authority that I come with. They came to John, they asked John the same question. By what authority do you do this, you're baptizing all these people, by what authority? And now they're asking Jesus. He is doing it by the... If you tell Me that John's authority was from God, then I'll tell you that My authority is from God.

They couldn't say that because John attested to Jesus, he testified concerning Jesus. He said, "Behold, the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." So if they acknowledge that John's authority was from God, then they would have to acknowledge that Jesus' authority is from God because John pointed people to Jesus. He said, this is the one of whom I spake to you that was coming after me, that's preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to untie. This is the One. This is the Lamb of God. And so, when Jesus asked them the question, He was willing to tell them the authority but, if they didn't recognize John's authority, they wouldn't recognize His either. And that's why He said, I won't tell you, you don't answer My question, and then I don't answer yours.

But then He gave them two parables. And they were both directed against the chief priests and the religious rulers of the people.

What think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and he said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. (21:28)

And now we're introducing the vineyard. Again the nation of Israel, God's vineyard, let's just look at Isaiah five and we see what Jesus is going to say in these two parables, relates back to this passage in Isaiah. Beginning with verse one,

"Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and he planted it with the choicest vine, and he built a tower in the midst of it, and also he made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I'll break down the wall thereof, and it will be trodden down:

And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: and I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold there was oppression; he looked for righteousness, but behold there

was a cry of the oppressed.” (Isaiah 5:1-7)

So very plainly, the vineyard is the house of Israel. And so Jesus picking up now from this analogy of Isaiah, something that they would immediately click on. “Certain man had two sons; he said, Go work in the vineyard.”

He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. (21:29)

This Greek word repented here is not the one that means “to have a change.” This particular word means to, he was really sorrowful, he thought it over, that’s not right, he was sorry and he went out and worked in the vineyard.

He came to his second son, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I, sir: (21:30)

The word “go” is inserted, you notice? I, sir, in other words, You bet. Yes, sir, right now! But he didn’t go. Now which of the two of them did the will of the Father? Actually,

Which of the two did the will of the Father? And they said unto him, The first. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. (21:31)

For John came unto you

Going back to John now, what was his ministry? Was it from heaven or from man? John came unto you...

in the way of righteousness, and you believed him not:

They wouldn’t answer but Jesus is saying, Hey, you didn’t believe him. If you said it was of heaven then you did believe him, but you can’t answer, you know you can’t. and so you believed him not,

but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and you, when you saw it, did not repent afterward, that you might believe him. (21:32)

Here’s John’s ministry. And those who had said, No way! I won’t follow God. They repented at the preaching of John, they were baptized, and they began to follow the Lord. Here were the religious leaders that were saying, We’re submitted to God. But they’re not. They are the second brother who said, Yes, sir, but didn’t do anything. And so He goes back to John’s ministry and there the publicans, the sinners, the harlots came out, their lives were transformed and changed, and they were the ones who truly did the will of God. One making a show of it, the other actually doing it. Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. A lot of people ascent to the Word of God, it isn’t just an ascending to the Word of God, it is doing the Word of God that is important. Which one did the will of the Father? And the answer of course is those who actually repented, were sorrowful, and then they went out and did work in the vineyard. Now He said,

Hear another parable:

Got you on that one. Give you another one.

There was a certain householder [landowner], which planted a vineyard [oh yes, now we’re back to Isaiah five full force], he hedged it round about [put a fence around it], he dug the winepress in it, he built a tower [all in Isaiah five], but now he let it out to husbandmen (21:33)

That he might receive the fruits of it; he put these religious leaders, the priesthood of Aaron and all, over it in order that they might cultivate it and develop it, in order that they might bring forth fruit unto him as the owner, the householder,

And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that he might receive the fruits of it. (21:34)

And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. (21:35)

And so again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. (21:36)

But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. (21:37)

But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; let’s kill him, and then we will seize on his inheritance. (21:38)

And they caught him, and they cast him out of the vineyard, and they slew him. (21:39)

The application of the parable is quite obvious, the vineyard again is the nation of Israel. The husbandmen are those religious leaders that the Lord put over the people to cultivate the vineyard, to watch over it, to bring fruit. And those that God sent were the prophets who were persecuted, who were

imprisoned, who were killed, stoned. When Stephen was facing the religious council there in the book of Acts, he said, Which of the prophets of God hath not your fathers persecuted? They rejected the prophets of God. Over and over, God sent His prophets but they persecuted, rejected, killed, stoned, until finally God sent His Son, I'll send My Son. Now Jesus was a threat to the religious leaders. They had said among themselves, don't you know we're got to get rid of this guy or we're going to lose our place, we're going to lose our position, we're going to lose our money! We've got a lot invested here, we're going to lose it all if this fellow prevails. Jesus was a threat to the religious leadership of that day, so they said, We've got to kill Him. And we'll take the inheritance, it will be ours then. We can continue on in this lavish lifestyle to which we've become accustomed, as we're ripping off the people.

But Jesus, having given them this parable, then He asked them the question,

When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what do you suppose he'll do to those husbandmen? (21:40)

They killed his son, they killed his other servants that he had sent to gather the fruit.

And they said unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and he will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. (21:41)

How out of their own mouths they condemned themselves. Jesus let them... right out of their mouths, they pronounced their own judgment. It's lucky that you don't judge yourself. You'd be in big trouble. That is, if you judged yourself in the same... Look at David. "That man shall surely be put to death." David, you're the man. If someone else is doing my sin, then is when I judge it. I don't judge it with me, I have a good excuse. I can rationalize. There was a reason why I did it, there was pressure and all this kind of stuff. But if you do it, that's terrible, kill him. That's awful, get rid of him. David said, Kill him. Hey, you're it though, man.

And here they're saying, He'll get rid of those wicked servants, he'll utterly, miserably destroy those wicked servants. Hey man, you're it. You are the wicked servants.

And so Jesus then said, Did you never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, it's marvellous in our eyes? (21:42)

You are the builders. You have rejected the stone. Throughout the Old Testament the rock and the stone are used as the symbols of God. He is our rock, He is our fortress; He has lifted me out of the miry clay, He set my feet upon a rock; lead me to the rock that is higher than I, and all the way through you find the rock used as the symbol for God. And the stone, a symbol for Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Remember Jesus said, Upon this rock I will build my church. The rock, solid foundation.

When Moses was coming through the wilderness with the children of Israel, and they came and said, We're thirsty, we don't have any water, it's arid. And we're going to die of thirst if we don't get water quickly. Moses went to the Lord and said, Lord, what shall I do? And the Lord said, Take your rod and smite the rock that water might come forth. And he smote the rock and the water gushed out and the people drank and they survived. And you remember Paul said, That rock was Christ. Later on you remember towards the end of the wilderness journey, again they came to Moses, and they said, We're thirsty, we're going to die of thirst. Why did we ever follow you? You didn't bring us into the land anyhow. And Moses was so angry with them, he went into God and said, God, they're going to kill me, I can't take it anymore, I've had forty years of nothing but gripe, I'm through, I quit. God said, Moses, they're thirsty, go out and speak to the rock that water might come forth. And Moses went out and he said, You rebels, how long do I have to put up with you, must I smite this rock again? And he smote the rock and the water gushed out and the people survived. But God said, Moses, come here, son. What did I tell you to do? Speak to the rock. Moses, why did you smite it? Mad. Moses, I got some bad news for you. You can't lead the people into the promised... Come on, Lord, that's not fair, forty years I've been putting up... what do you mean? The Lord said, Don't talk to me anymore about it, Moses, it's a done issue. Because you failed to represent Me. You see, you destroyed, Moses, the whole picture, the rock is Jesus. He was smitten once and by His being smitten, water of life flows freely to all who are thirsty and will come and drink. But you don't have to smite the rock again. All you have to do is speak to the rock and the water flows freely. And so Moses just sort of upset the whole beautiful analogy that God was setting up and he blew the whole thing. So it was so serious, God said, Sorry,

you can't lead them into the land of promise. The law can never bring you into the full rich promised land of God. The law can lead you to it, schoolmaster to bring you to Christ, but it takes Christ to bring you into the land. And so Joshua, Jesus, Joshua. Look how God set it up so perfectly. Hebrew name for the Greek name Jesus. The law couldn't bring them in, but Jesus does. And He brings us into the glorious, rich full life of the Spirit. Something the law can't do.

So Jesus said, Haven't you ever read in the scriptures, The stone which was rejected by the builders, the same is become the chief stone of the corner: this is the work of the Lord, it's marvellous in our eyes?

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, [no longer the vineyard, the kingdom of God is going to be taken from you] and it shall be given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof. (21:43)

God's greatest desire is that you bring forth fruit. Now turn to John chapter fifteen, as Jesus is talking to His disciples, they are to be the new husbandmen.

"I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away [the nation of Israel, the fig tree withered and died]: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it or washes it, that it might bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, and you are the branches: and He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and so forth... Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so shall you be my disciples." (John 15:1-8)

That's what God wants, fruit. He doesn't want fruitless life. He doesn't want just pretty leaves. He wants fruit, He wants fruit from your life. And what is the fruit that God is seeking? The fruit of the Spirit is love, it's manifested in joy, peace, and longsuffering, and gentleness, and goodness, and temperance, and meekness; that's what God is looking for, the fruit of the Spirit. Love. When the Lord comes into His garden, comes to the vineyard, He wants fruit, He wants to enjoy the fruit. He wants to enjoy the love, the praise, the adoration, let us offer unto Him the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips unto God. And so He comes into His church, His vineyard, desiring and looking for fruit. And may He find always that fruit that He desires as He comes and joins in our fellowship. As He is here, may our hearts just be lifted in praise and worship and adoration of our Lord. And let love just flow so that He is pleased. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and may He find us just bearing an abundance of fruit, His love constantly flowing in and through our lives and out unto others. And then Jesus went on to say,

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (21:44)

Jesus, the stone, set at naught of the builders. If you just cast yourself on Jesus, you'll be broken, the kind of breaking that He is. But if you resist Him, if He falls on you, you'll be ground to powder. You're dust. You're wiped out if He falls on you. But falling on Him, that breaking, how beautiful it is.

And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables,

The light went on, they said, Uh-oh!

they perceived that he was speaking of them. (21:45)

It hit. Got me!

But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because the people took him as a prophet. (21:46)

They accepted Him as a prophet. They were in a dilemma, they wanted to arrest Him but they knew they couldn't do it publicly because the people, the general public were excited and they were seeing the healing, and they were looking at Him as a prophet. And so they have a real dilemma, and of course, that's where Judas comes in who of course, tells them, I'll show you where He is in a private place where you can arrest Him without the public and before the people even wake up and realize what's going on, you can get Him on a cross, it will be too late. So that's why the midnight trial and the early morning with Pilate. And by nine o'clock in the morning before people really realized what was going on, Jesus was hanging on a Roman

cross. So here they are, they're in a dilemma as to what to do. They wanted to arrest Him but they were afraid to do it.

This is the beginning of a face-off between Jesus and the religious rulers, it will end in chapter twenty-three with one of the most scathing denunciations upon any group of people ever uttered at any time in history as Jesus just takes them to task. So He'll be dealing now in the next couple of chapters with the Pharisees and the Sadducees and these religious leaders and they'll be challenging Him with questions, He'll be challenging them with questions. And then, He will write them off in chapter twenty-three.

Father, we thank You for your Word, the certainty of Your Word. Lord even as we've studied this passages tonight, we see so many prophecies that were fulfilled, the sure word of prophecy. Lord we thank You for the fact that we have become your vineyard. Help us to realize the awesome responsibility that You have placed upon us, as the husbandmen, the overseers. And Lord may we so cultivate and develop your vineyard that as You come to receive the fruit, You'll be welcome Lord to enjoy the fruit of Your Spirit, the love of Your people, the worship, the praise, and Lord may it always be, may it always be that our hearts will be filled and our sanctuary will be filled with praises unto You, knowing Lord that You inhabit the praises of Your people, Your people, Israel. And Lord having removed the vineyard from them and making us Your vineyard, we know You inhabit our praises also. So may our hearts be continually filled with praises unto Thee, in Jesus' Name we ask it, Amen.