

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

MATTHEW 21:1-22:14

When my kids were small we'd always go see the Harlem Globetrotters when they came to town. And amazingly, every time we went the Globetrotters won.

But what always impressed the kids was the Globetrotter's grand entrance.

The house lights dimmed. Shining and swirling spotlights surrounded the portal at the end of the court. Smoke billowed - music blared - the PA announcer shouted his best, "[Ladies and Gentleman...](#)" The crowd roared! Finally, the Globetrotters came through the portal bouncing their basketballs. It was a grand entrance.

Once, when we got home Nick asked me, "[Dad, do you think our football team can have that smoke when we run onto the field?](#)" Nick was really impressed.

And so were the Jews, when Jesus made His grand entrance into the holy city of Jerusalem. His arrival was accompanied with fanfare fit for a King.

For nine months Jesus had zigzagged His way from Galilee to Jerusalem.

In all, Jesus stopped at 35 different locations on His final journey south. At the end of chapter 20 He passed through Jericho on His final ascent to Jerusalem.

Jesus had left the Sea of Galilee nine months earlier and planned His arrival perfectly so that He'd enter Jerusalem on the Sunday prior to the Passover.

Matthew records that strategic day in chapter 21, “**Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives...**” The Mount of Olives is the eastern limits of Jerusalem – adjacent to Mount Moriah (or Temple Mount).

The two mountains are separated only by a narrow valley called the Kidron.

Jesus probably spent the previous night in Bethany, a small village two miles east of Jerusalem - on the eastern slope or Jericho-side of the Mount of Olives. Bethany was the home of Jesus' three friends - Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

During His last week Bethany served as Jesus' home base while in Jerusalem.

“**Bethphage**” means “**house of figs.**” It was an even smaller village on the east slope - near the top of the Mount of Olives - between Bethany and Jerusalem.

“**Then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her.**

Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them.”

Years ago, ESPN did an interview with multi-millionaire slugger Mark McGwire.

At the time Mark was playing for the Oakland A's and was an eligible bachelor.

In the interview he expressed his loneliness and his difficulties in relationships. Mark said there was no shortage of girls who wanted to date him and even marry him, but he could never be sure if they were interested in him, or his money.

In a sense, Jesus had the same problem.

The miracles He performed excited the crowds and drew many admirers. *Jesus was a very eligible Messiah.* But He was never sure of the crowd's motivation.

Jesus wanted people to follow Him – not His miracles.

This is why throughout His ministry He never organized a public demonstration.

With one exception - Matthew 21. Here's the only public demonstration Jesus ever personally organized. And He starts with transportation arrangements. The disciples saddle a donkey for the most spectacular grand entrance of all-time!

Verse 4 “All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.' ”

So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.”

Notice two features of Jesus' one public crusade... First, **its preparations were specific.** And second, **its timing was strategic.**

Zechariah 9:9 predicted Messiah would appear to the nation riding on a donkey.

Prior to the reign of Solomon, Hebrews considered donkeys royal animals.

Deuteronomy 17 prohibited the king from accumulating horses, lest he trust in his cavalry rather than in his God. That's why King David rode on a donkey. But Solomon disobeyed the Law and built stables for his vast herds of horses.

From Solomon's time onward the Jewish kings, like their Gentile counterparts, rode what they considered to be more noble animals, giant stallions, white steeds.

In choosing to ride a donkey into the city Jesus was making a two-fold claim.

One, a donkey harkened back to the days of David. The Messiah was to be the descendant of David. Jesus wanted to draw upon that imagery to reinforce His identity as the Son of David. His choice of a donkey spoke of **who He was**.

But it also spoke of **what He was**. The donkey was a beast of burden, a pack animal, a servant. In choosing a donkey Jesus was expressing His humility.

Jesus was King - but a different type of King, ruling a different type of kingdom. His kingdom was not of earthly pomp and *power*, Jesus' Kingdom was spiritual.

He came not with a rod of iron, but with cords of love. He came not to rule over *institutions*, but *individuals* - to establish His throne in the hearts of men.

The Old Testament had predicted the *donkey*, but it also predicted the *date*.

This is an amazing prophecy. Daniel 9 pinpoints the exact date Messiah would appear to the nation Israel. God identified to Daniel 69 weeks – or 7 year intervals.

Daniel 9:25 declares, "know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks..." He's talking about a period of 69 weeks or 483 years - even more specifically, 173,880 days.

History tells us that the Persian King Artaxerxes issued the decree to restore and build Jerusalem on March 14, 445 BC. If you were to take a calendar and chart off 173,880 days you would come to the date of April 6, 32 AD.

This was the Sunday before Passover - the exact day Jesus orchestrated His only public demonstration. The day He rode the donkey down the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem – was the day predicted by Daniel 500 years in advance.

“And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road.” This why we call the day *“Palm Sunday”* - spreading out palm fronds was like rolling out the red carpet.

The Palm tree was a symbol of Israel. It spoke of the Jews desire for independence. They believed Jesus was the long awaited Deliverer.

“Then the multitudes who went before and those who

followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!" Just 3 days earlier Jesus had raised his friend Lazarus from the dead. In Jericho he'd opened the eyes of two blind men.

And these were just a few of Jesus' reported miracles. Among the tens of thousands of folks in Jerusalem for the Passover the buzz was about Jesus.

In the Apocrypha - 1 Maccabees – we're told of an event that occurred between the Testaments. God delivered the Jews from the Syrians. About 150 BC a priest named Simon Maccabaeus overthrew the Syrian army of Antiochus Epiphanes.

1 Maccabees 13:51 tells us, "The Jews entered with praise and palm branches... and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel." Here they do the same.

Two centuries had passed and again foreign armies occupied Israel - this time the Romans. The multitude who greeted Jesus wanted Him to use His powers to break a foreign yoke just as His ancestors had done a century-and-a-half earlier.

And this is why they quote *Psalm 118:25-26*. They cry out, "Hosanna" which means "save now." They were interested in political, military freedom...

But Jesus knew the people would never truly be free until they were free from an evil tyrant called "Sin." In the long run *dying on a cross* would do more for His people than *sitting on*

a throne. Jesus wanted to deliver His people spiritually.

Yet because Jesus didn't fulfill the people's expectations the fickle crowds turned on Him. Many of the same folks who sang on Sunday, "**Hosanna, Hosanna**" – will shout on Thursday, "**Crucify Him, Crucify Him.**"

And don't think this isn't repeated. People today reject Jesus when it becomes apparent He has an agenda all His own. As long as Jesus meets our needs, and cooperates with our plans, all is fine. But Jesus doesn't always share our agenda.

Remember Jesus' priority is not our *happiness*, but our *holiness*.

It is interesting Daniel 9 goes on to say that after the 483 years Messiah will be "**cut off, but not for Himself.**" The phrase "**cut off**" refers to a violent death.

We know that just 5 days later Jesus was crucified by the Romans.

Remember too, this was the Sunday before the Passover – the Jewish **Day of Preparation**. It was the day Jewish families selected their Passover Lamb.

They'd go to the market and find a lamb without blemish.

Though the Jews who greeted Jesus didn't realize it – they also were choosing a Lamb. Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.

It's sad the Jews didn't fully grasp the ramifications of the events that day.

In Luke's account of the Triumphal entry he tells us that

Jesus stopped along the road and wept over the city. In Luke 19:42, Jesus says of Jerusalem "If you had known... especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!

But... you did not know the time of your visitation."

The Jews didn't grasp Daniel's prophecy – and overlooked his timing. Thus the nation missed their opportunity for peace. Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah - and for the last 2000 years they've known nothing but servitude and suffering.

Verse 10 "And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." During the Passover the population of Jerusalem swelled from its usual 200,000 to over 2½ million. Pilgrims came from all over Jewry.

The city was teeming with people and in 32 AD all people could talk about - the buzz – was Jesus. The word translated "moved" is the word "seismic" – the force of an earthquake. The arrival of Jesus shook-up the entire city of Jerusalem...

"Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves." As I noted, the Sunday before Passover was the Day of Preparation - and on that day not only was the Passover Lamb selected, but the house was also purged of any leaven. And this is what Jesus did next...

The Jews hoped Jesus would storm the Fortress of Antonio - the Roman military compound on the Temple Mount –

instead He stormed the Temple.

Jesus cleansed His Father's house of the leaven of greed and corruption.

Earlier in Jesus' ministry - during His first Passover in Jerusalem - He took a whip and drove out the moneychangers. Here, a whip is never mentioned.

Evidently, Jesus uses His bare hands and violently turns over the tables.

Money goes flying. Merchandise gets ruined. Jesus ransacks the Temple's business establishment. He lays hands on the Jews – *bare-knuckled style*.

There are many lessons to be gleaned here, but don't miss the obvious...

Jesus of Nazareth was no wimp. Remember, Jesus was a carpenter - and carpenters in those days didn't go to Home Depot to buy lumber. They went to the forest and timbered a few trees. Jesus was a muscular guy - who wasn't afraid to mix it up when necessary. When He got angry no one wanted to be in His way.

In Jesus' day the priests had turned *Temple worship* into a *lucrative business*.

When a sacrifice was brought to the Temple - whether it be a dove, or a lamb it first had to be inspected by the priests for defects. And they always found a flaw that required the worshipper to purchase an acceptable lamb from the Temple flock. The costs for such a lamb were astronomical – *like a gallon of gas*.

The moneychangers were also in on the scam.

Exodus 30:13 required every Hebrew male over 20 years-old to pay a Temple tax of half-a-shekel. The priests wouldn't accept Roman currency, since the coins were engraved with a picture of the Emperor – so they had their own Temple coin.

To pay the tax a person had to exchange his Roman coins for Temple coins - but at a hefty exchange rate. The priests were making a buck off God - and Jesus didn't like it! Jesus *ripped up the folks who were ripping off the flock.*

I have no doubt that Jesus is still ticked off today for the same reason.

People are still making a buck of God. It's a sin to take advantage of a man's hunger for God by selling Him ministry materials at exorbitant prices – whether books, tapes, or concert tickets. Hey, *covering costs* isn't *making a fortune.*

Actually, the worse part of **what** the merchants did was **where** it was done.

The market was on the south end of the Temple Mount in an area known as *the Court of the Gentiles*. This was where an interested Gentile came to pray and learn about God. It was the only exposure the Gentiles had to the true worship of God.

Yet they were being turned off by the obvious and blatant greed of the priests.

If there's a Court of the Gentiles today it's the media. Television and radio are the two venues available to

unbelievers to come and learn about the true God.

Yet turn on a Christian station or program, and nine times out of ten, you'll be exposed to a money-hungry preacher. This is also defiling *the Court of the Gentiles* and turning people off to Jesus before they're ever exposed to His grace and truth.

The picture we're painting today is as distorted as the corruption in the Temple.

One more point, I would imagine one of the most frustrating aspects of the sin Jesus found in the Temple that day was that He had removed it once before.

Jesus had already cleansed the Temple of the very same sin.

I wonder if Jesus has the same frustration when He cleanses our lives...

How often does He cleanse us of some sin only to return later and find it right back where it once had been? We need a continually cleansing of God's Word.

Verse 13 **"And He said to them, 'It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"** Notice, Jesus calls the Temple **"My house."** And He quotes Isaiah 56:7. The Old Testament verse reads, **"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations..."** – not just the Jews.

The implication is that the Temple was for Gentiles as well as Jews, yet the Jews had polluted the Court of the Gentiles by turning it into **"a den of thieves."**

“Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant..." The priests realized the title "Son of David" was a term reserved for Messiah. Jesus was claiming to be no less than God's chosen.

And (the Jews) said to (Jesus), "Do You hear what these are saying?"

And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, (He quotes Psalm 8:2) 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?"

The chief priests didn't understand the pure simplicity of praise.

True worship isn't a long, ornate, soliloquy prayed in perfect King James English – or a song in perfect pitch sung by a polished, trained soloist...

It's the giggle of a little girl in the presence of a boy she has a crush on...

It's the cooing of an infant resting in the loving arms of his mother...

It's a child running to greet his daddy as he walks in the door from work...

True worship is the ecstatic response of a heart in contact with someone it loves, respects, and admires... It doesn't say "Give me" - it says, "Thanks."

It doesn't demand gifts or *presents*. It wants to spend time in God's *presence*.

Verse 17 "Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there." Day one is complete. The first day of His last week is now over.

The opening act of the drama in Jerusalem has come to a close. Jesus returns to the eastern suburbs - over the top of the Mount of Olives - to Lazarus' house. He'll get a good night's rest. Jesus will need it - Monday will be a busy day!

In the 60s *The Mamas and the Papas* sung a tune entitled, "Monday, Monday."

Here're the lyrics, "On Monday morning you gave me no warning of what it would be - that Monday evening you would leave and not take me.

Every other day of the week is fine. But when every Monday comes. You find me crying all of the time. Monday, Monday couldn't guarantee - that Monday evening you would still be here with me." The author must've spent a warm weekend with his girlfriend, but come Monday she splits without him.

It's interesting how the words to the song parallel Jesus' last Monday.

He had been warmly embraced on Sunday. He rode His donkey into Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd - but come Monday the tide will change.

The Jewish leaders are determined to trap Jesus or discredit Him. The Temple is filled with tension. By the end of the day the Jewish religious establishment will solidify their

decision to murder Jesus - and we'll find Him on the Mount of Olives crying, weeping over the rejection of the Jews and the destruction it'll cause.

This infamous Monday was the last time Jesus entered the sacred halls of the Temple. It was the day the Jews rejected Jesus – and the day God rejected them.

“Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry.” Apparently, Jesus skipped breakfast. He didn't eat his Wheaties. His stomach growled.

“And seeing a fig tree by the road...” Fig trees are common in Israel. They grow to 25 feet high by 20 feet wide - and produced broad leaves and delicious fruit.

Remember the village between Bethany and Jerusalem - "Bethphage" which means "house of figs." It may've been at Bethphage that Jesus saw this fig tree.

The fig was so common in Israel it was a staple in the Jewish diet.

You might say it was one of the four major Jewish food groups: bread, grapes, fish, and figs. Jesus saw this fig tree by the road, but there was a problem.

“He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." With most fruit trees the leaves appear first - then the fruit. But the fig tree is an exception. On a fig tree the fruit precedes the leaves.

Thus, when Jesus saw that this tree had only leaves He knew that it was diseased and barren, and pronounced a curse upon the tree.

“And immediately the fig tree withered away.”

There are those that feel Jesus was fickle. He skipped breakfast, and was a little grouchy. He allowed His hunger to erupt in anger and He cursed a tree.

Jesus wasn't being fickle – He was being *figurative*.

The fig tree was a well-known symbol of the nation Israel. Jeremiah 8:13, Hosea 9:10, Joel 1:7, and Micah 7:1-6 are just a few of the places in the Old Testament where the fig tree is an idiom for Israel. Jesus saw in this fruitless fig tree a figure of the nation Israel. She had leaves, but no fruit.

The Jews had the trappings of religion. She kept rules and observed rituals. She was clothed with the traditions, but behind the facade there was no fruit.

There was no real love for God - none of the gentle graces that are evident when a soul is in contact with the Spirit - *patience, joy, peace, kindness...*

Understand what was true of Israel can also be true of us...

Good works, charitable deeds, religious tradition can be like leaves.

They make the tree pretty and pleasing to man, but God sees past the leaves to the absence of fruit and condemns it to judgment. Jesus is still hungry for fruit – not leaves. There's a rumbling in His stomach for *fruit* - not *fluff!*

“And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" The parable of the fig tree illustrates the last 2000 years of Jewish history. Jesus

came to the nation looking for fruit, but found none. As a result the nation withered and died, and has remained barren for 2000 years.

“So Jesus answered and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done.

The disciples missed the point of the illustration and fixated on the power behind it. Jesus reminds us of the tremendous power of *faith infused prayer*.

Here's the key to prayer, “If you have faith and do not doubt...” If we refuse to yield to the “*what ifs*” and hold on to God’s promises, He’ll answer our prayers.

Verse 22, “And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

“Now when He came into the temple...”

It’s still Monday and Jesus enters the same Temple He cleansed the day before. Obviously, He had caused an uproar in the religious establishment.

These chief priests were the authority who’d sponsored the rip off and got the kickbacks from the gouging. In their minds, Jesus had intruded on their turf.

There still seething and angry – and looking for revenge.

“The chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching...” The Jewish hierarchy confronted Jesus while He was teaching.

Picture Jesus under Solomon's porch surrounded by huge columns 40 feet high stretching in either direction for several hundred feet. A large crowd has gathered around Him and the people are listening attentively – hanging on His every word.

Suddenly, rudely, the chief priests barrel through the crowd and interrupt the Master. This is not a low-key approach - Jesus is being publicly challenged.

And (they) said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" Remember these were the chief priests, and I mean "chief."

They were the barons of Judaism – so-called representatives of God - brokers of Jewish authority. If they'd not authorized Jesus, where did He get His authority?

On many occasions Jesus had explained that His authority came from God.

But here Jesus answers their question with a question of His own...

"But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John - where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet."

So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." What a courageous reply! Nothing like going out on a limb... Under the gun the chiefs wimp out...

“And (Jesus) said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” The chief priests had tried to corner Jesus - bully Him around - bruise His standing with the people. Instead, they end up with egg on their faces.

Jesus goes on to tell three stories that testify to His authority – without giving the chief priests ammunition to use against Him and publicly condemn Him.

Verse 28 "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' "He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.

Which of the two did the will of his father?"

Notice, the second son substituted *saying the right words* for *making the right choices*. This is easy to do. Talk about a subject long enough, and thoroughly enough - and you'll make yourself believe you're a participant - an expert.

There're sportswriters who've never played an inning of baseball, but carry themselves like they were great athletes. Talking about baseball doesn't make you a player - any more than talking about obedience makes you obedient.

“They said to Him, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.” They started out defiant, but confessed and turned from their sin. They were willing to

repent.

But the Jews had substituted *profession* for *possession*. They just talked.

“For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.” They refused to admit they were wrong.

"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower.

And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.”

This was a common business arrangement in Palestine.

A landowner would develop his land - turn it into a vineyard - plant the choicest grapes, install a protective hedge, build a winepress, and erect a security tower.

What Jesus is describing is a fully loaded – ready-to-work - turn-key vineyard. After building the vineyard, the landowner would then lease it out to a tenant who would work it, and return a portion of the harvest to the landowner as rent.

“Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.” A few feet west of where Jesus was standing were huge double doors that marked the entrance into the Holy Place of the Temple...

The doors were engraved with grapevines carved in solid gold - over 100 feet tall. Even more than the fig tree the grapevine was a symbol for Israel.

Isaiah 5:7 concludes, "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah are his pleasant plant." The vineyard is Israel.

The workers sent from the landowner were the Old Testament prophets. And Israel rejected God's messengers. Isaiah himself was sawn in two.

Verse 37 "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' They were greedy, and jealousy, and power-hungry. They forgot God owned the vineyard - not them.

This will be the motive in the murder of Jesus.

"So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him."

Martin Luther, known for his fiery temper, said, "If I were God and the world had treated me as it treated Him, I would kick the wretched thing to pieces."

God would certainly be right and justified in doing just that, but that is not what He's chosen to do. Even though the Jews rejected the prophets and killed His only Son He still extends the olive branch. God still wants to make peace with Israel.

Spurgeon once wrote, "If you reject God, He answers you with tears. If you wound Him, He bleeds cleansing. If you kill

Him, He dies to redeem. If you bury Him, He rises to bring resurrection. Jesus is love made manifest."

Despite how we've rejected God in the past He's still willing to forgive us and accept us. All He asks of us is to repent of *your sin* and trust in *His Son*.

"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." There is a limit to God's patience. Judgment will come.

The landowner will one day return Himself and punish those people who have usurped His authority, and rejected the messengers who came in His name!

"Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" Psalm 118 was the song the Jews had sung the day before when Jesus rode His donkey into the city.

Jesus applies this passage to Himself and appeals to a well-known tradition...

The story goes when Herod's Temple was under construction the stones were quarried some distance from the Temple Mount and hauled in for placement.

One of the initial stones didn't seem to fit and was rolled into the valley below.

After all the stones had been shipped and the Temple was near completion the builders realized they were one stone short, the cornerstone was missing in action. Then they remember the stone they'd rejected. It was the foundation stone.

Jesus applies this story to Himself. Jesus is the cornerstone of God's plan - but the chief priests, the builders of Judaism, rejected Him. Yet Who the Jews rejected became the foundation of a new, more glorious Temple, the Church.

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it." This new nation is the Church. Peter calls us "a holy nation." God's kingdom was transferred from Israel to the Church.

"And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." Understand whenever a man meets Jesus he gets stoned.

I'm not talking about drugs – but salvation involves getting stoned.

Jesus is the Rock. And you can't meet Him without getting broken. But it happens one of two ways – *freely* or *forcibly* – *willingly* or *willfully*...

Either you choose to come broken to God – or the Rock will break you.

Either Jesus humbles you and grinds you to *powder* – or you come to Him humble and He gives you *power* to start over... It's powder or power?

“Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.” Good perception. “But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.”

Chapter 22 “And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said...” He’s still answering, “By what authority are you doing these things?”

Its interesting, in the first parable the emphasis is on the **Father**.

In the second parable the focus is on the **Son**.

Now in the third and final parable the spotlight is on the **Holy Spirit**.

“By what authority are you doing these things?” By the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - all three members of the Trinity testify to Jesus’ authority.

Verse 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.” First on the guest list were the Jews.

Jesus said the Gospel was for the Jew first, then the Greek.

This was not a matter of preference, but precedence.

It’s not that God loves Jews more than Gentiles - God’s promises were made first to Jews. The Jews got first dibs. If we said “girls first” it doesn’t mean guys could go. It’s just proper etiquette. Well, in God’s economy it’s “Jews first.”

“Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who

are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.' But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business." The Jews snubbed God's banquet.

"And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.

But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." When Israel rejected Jesus, God did send an army against Jerusalem. His army wore Roman uniforms. In 70 AD the Roman General Titus killed a million Jews and ravaged the Holy City.

"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'" Go to Lilburn, GA and ask that gnarly crowd.

God is so merciful He'll even allow that unsavory crowd to enter in.

"So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests."

Notice both good and bad are invited. This describes us...

Some of you have lived *spotless lives* – others *spotted lives*. It just goes to show that from the *best of the good* to the *worst of the bad* - none of us come to God on our own merit and good works. Faith in Jesus is the answer for all.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.” Here’s the ticket to the banquet – do you wear the proper attire? What we wear matters in heaven!

Isaiah 61:10 explains what we should be sporting, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

And these threads can't be bought. You don't have enough money. Righteous Robes are woven by the perfection of Jesus and purchased with His blood.

We put on Christ by faith! *But what happens to a man who's not rightly robed?*

Verse 13 “Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "For many are called, but few are chosen." The issue is not *good* or *bad*.

To be saved you need to dress for success – put on the rightness of Jesus.