<u>Mathew 21</u>: Jerusalem and Temple Cleansing

I mentioned last week that from chapter 20 on, the pace of recorded events surrounding Jesus was ramping up. What we'll see in chapter 21 is the moment when Jesus enters Jerusalem in an official capacity. Prior to this entry, He entered just as every other citizen would. We also learn that Jesus cleansed the temple a second time. I find it interesting that most think of this event as a singular occurrence, but Jesus cleared out the crooks on two separate occasions, three years apart. Jesus symbolically cursed a fig tree to show the deprived state the nation of Israel had chosen to be in; fruitless, lifeless, and powerless in the world. And finally, we see Jesus challenged once again by the religious rulers. This time is a bit different than in the previous encounters. I think I'll leave that alone until we get to those verses next week. Let's begin by reading verses 1-11.

Vss: 1-11 These verses should be very familiar to us. Traditionally, in just a few weeks, many pastors will draw attention to either this account or Mark or Luke's account. Most will use this passage to draw our attention to what we know as Palm Sunday. When we read these verses, most will probably see this event as a celebration of the Messiah entering Jerusalem on His way to the cross. While there is nothing necessarily wrong with this line of thinking, I would say, there are much deeper things we need to consider concerning this moment. Let's consider two options regarding the donkey and the colt. First, as so often taught, Jesus, in His omniscient power, certainly would have known about the animals being tied up where they were. It certainly could have been a miracle from the start. J. Vernon McGee says that it something could occur naturally with men, then why the need for a miracle. The second option then would be that Jesus, on one of his previous visits, maybe the day prior, had arranged for the animals to be where they were. In both options, the truth of the moment is not lost. Jesus is absolutely exercising His authority over the situation. **What phrase do we see here that let's us know what's truly going on?** (See vs. 3)

Now, to better understand what is said next, I believe it's important to look at the source of the prophecy recorded by Matthew in 5. Let's read **Zechariah 9:9.** Do you notice any difference? Two things are omitted. First, *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!"* Why do you think Matthew didn't include these words? Matthew, by the time he recorded the events, had the benefit of hindsight. Even though we consider this event "The Triumphal Entry", Jesus was not entering Jerusalem for the purpose of rejoicing. When will Jesus enter Jerusalem for purpose of rejoicing? His second coming. The second omission is "salvation". Zechariah wasn't referring to spiritual salvation in his prophecy. He was referring to physical salvation. This is where the colt comes into the picture. Jesus wasn't riding a baby donkey to show modesty. Instead, He was doing something that would be

recognized by the Gentiles in attendance as well as the Jews. I've mentioned this before. Kings would often enter one of the cities under there rule either on a horse, or on a meekly little donkey. If on the horse, then it meant war. On the little donkey, it symbolized peace. Jesus was presenting Himself, not as the warrior "savior" expected by so many but was entering as their peaceful King. The King of Kings! I'm of the belief that the people did not get what they thought they were getting. The laying of the cloaks and the palm tree branches teaches us that they we anticipated their "savior" to be the one to enter. They wanted the warrior king and not the peaceful king that came through the gate. Look at verse 10. They were willing to acknowledge His authority and deity, but wanted it on their terms, not God's. When will Jesus come on a horse as the warrior King? **Read Revelation 19:11-16. That day will truly be the day of Triumphal Entry!**

Vss: 12-17 What should we garner form these verses? What is Jesus doing? Is there significance for the timing of this second cleansing of the temple? Look at verse 13. Jesus uses two separate prophecies to offer His reasoning. Isaiah 56:7, which says, *"these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."* We usually don't know the prophecies in the manner they would have, so this first portion from Jesus would have stood as very harsh words. The second comes from Jeremiah 7:11, which says, *"Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD."*

I want you to consider something here also. Jesus, immediately after enter the city, arrived at the temple, and used it to teach us about the importance of the condition of our heart. Perhaps it's a good way to end tonight. If Jesus enters the temple, your temple, what will He truly find? If it's as it should be, then there is nothing to worry over. If it's not, then what should we do to reconcile?