

Lesson 43

**Time –4/1/30 AD, 11 Nisan Sunday
and 4/2/30 AD, 12 Nisan Monday**

In our last lesson we studied part of Jesus' address to the multitudes which He gave on His entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The pilgrim crowds had thronged Him on the road from Bethany as He wound along the skirts of the Mt. of Olives where they were camped. Finally, He had stopped in front of the eastern wall of the Temple Mount opposite the Eastern Gate of the Temple. There he had addressed the crowds and prayed to the Father. The Father had spoken to Him audibly. We then studied the great Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 which dealt with Jesus' ministry and rejection.

After Jesus' great message to the crowd in front of the Temple Mount He had disappeared into the crowd and made His way into the city and on into the Temple. It was probably about then that Jesus had made the address about His greater mission of presenting the character of the Father in Himself (John 12:44-50). As Mark will tell us later (Mark 11:11), by the time Jesus got to the Temple it was very late in the afternoon. This was undoubtedly because the crowd of hundreds of thousands was so thick in thronging about Him on the road that it took that long to travel the four miles from Bethany.

Matthew 21:12-13 Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

Luke 19:45-46 Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

Here Matthew and Luke indicated that an overturning of the tables of the "money changers" occurred on late Sunday afternoon. In Mark 11:14-17 the author recorded the same kind of action occurring on Monday morning. John does not record it at all. Jesus evidently overturned the tables on both late Sunday afternoon and on Monday morning. He had also overturned the tables on Passover three years earlier as recorded in John 2:14-17. This provokes a question. Jesus had visited Jerusalem at least five times during His ministry. He had visited the Temple three times during Passover, once at Tabernacles, once at the Feast of Dedication, and once during an unnamed Feast. Why was it, that it was only on His Passover visits to the Temple that Jesus was driven to attack the profiteering greed at the Temple? Admittedly it was at its worst at Passover. That was when they collected the Temple head tax. At that time, they sold the Temple half shekel at an extortionate rate of exchange. As a result, Temple visitors had to buy the Temple half shekel needed for Temple transactions (Exodus 30:13), at much more than a normal half shekel's value. This happened although it was not at all clear that the Law intended the Temple head tax to be the annual practice that it had become by the First Century AD. The

priests also sold as many as fifty to eighty thousand lambs for the Passover sacrifice. They also sold these at an inflated rate which could be purchased only with the overvalued Temple shekels. This is not to include the daily sale of doves for sacrifice at extortionate prices which was a type of robbery.

The greed of the religious rulers in Jesus' time is made clear from the following passages from Josephus in which he described the 1st Century Jewish rulers of whom he was a contemporary. Josephus described the immense amount of wealth taken from the vaults in Jerusalem as booty after the taking of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Yet the original owners of that booty were people who were content to see their own poor starve to death in a number of 1st Century famines. Below Josephus described the triumph held for Vespasian in Rome. The Triumph was for the purpose of displaying all the booty and captives taken in the taking of Jerusalem in 70 AD:

Wars of the Jews, BOOK VI, CHAPTER V. Verse 5. - for there was here to be seen a mighty quantity of silver, and gold, and ivory, contrived into all sorts of things, and did not appear as carried along in pompous show only, but, as a man may say, running along like a river. Some parts were composed of the rarest purple hangings, and so carried along; and others accurately represented to the life what was embroidered by the arts of the Babylonians. There were also precious stones that were transparent, some set in crowns of gold, and some in other ouches,¹ as the workmen pleased; and of these such a vast number were brought, that we could not but thence learn how vainly we imagined any of them to be rarities. The images of the gods were also carried, being as well wonderful for their largeness, as made very artificially, and with great skill of the workmen; nor were any of these images of any other than very costly materials; and many species of animals were brought, every one in their own natural ornaments. ---- The magnificence also of their structure afforded one both pleasure and surprise; for upon many of them were laid carpets of gold. There was also wrought gold and ivory fastened about them all; ---- Moreover, there followed those pageants a great number of ships; and for the other spoils, they were carried in great plenty. But for those that were taken in the temple of Jerusalem, they made the greatest figure of them all; that is, the golden table, of the weight of many talents; the candlestick also, that was made of gold, though its construction were now changed from that which we made use of; for its middle shaft was fixed upon a basis, and the small branches were produced out of it to a great length, having the likeness of a trident in their position, and had every one a socket made of brass for a lamp at the tops of them.

Josephus also described the vast amount of gold that just the ordinary Roman soldiers had been able to take from the Temple vaults:

Wars of the Jews, BOOK VII, CHAPTER VI. Verse 1. -- the (Roman) soldiers had such vast quantities of the spoils which they had gotten by plunder, that in Syria a pound weight of gold was sold for half its former value.

¹ *An ouch is any setting for a precious stone, such as a clasp, broach, belt buck, necklace, or ring.*

Wars of the Jews, BOOK VII, CHAPTER V, Verse 2 Yet was there no small quantity of the riches that had been in that city still found among its ruins, a great deal of which the Romans dug up; but the greatest part was discovered by those who were captives, and so they carried it away; I mean the gold and the silver, and the rest of that most precious furniture which the Jews had, and which the owners had treasured up underground, against the uncertain fortunes of war.

Wars of the Jews, BOOK VI, CHAPTER 6, Verse 2. So Titus (*the Roman General addressing the besieged Jerusalem*) – said, “- we have given you leave to gather up that tribute which is paid to God with such other gifts that are dedicated to him; nor have we called those that carried these donations to account, nor prohibited them; till at length you became richer than we ourselves.”

The following passage from Josephus described how during a great famine in the 1st Century AD, the wealthy Jewish leaders left it to a Gentile queen to relieve the mass starvation:

Antiquities of the Jews, BOOK XX, CHAPTER 2, Verse 5. So she (Queen Helena of Asia Minor) desired her son to give her leave to go thither (Jerusalem); upon which he gave his consent to what she desired very willingly, and made great preparations for her dismissal, and gave her a great deal of money, and she went down to the city Jerusalem, her son conducting her on her journey a great way. Now her coming was of very great advantage to the people of Jerusalem; for whereas a famine did oppress them at that time, and many people died for want of what was necessary to procure food withal, queen Helena sent some of her servants to Alexandria with money to buy a great quantity of corn, and others of them to Cyprus, to bring a cargo of dried figs. And as soon as they were come back, and had brought those provisions, which was done very quickly, she distributed food to those that were in want of it and left a most excellent memorial behind her of this benefaction, which she bestowed on our whole nation.

However, I think that the biggest reason Jesus raged against these Temple practices by overturning the tables of the money changers at Passover was this: Passover was intended to point, in figure, of His own sacrifice on the cross as our Passover Lamb. Thus, the corruption and greed which the Jews had incorporated into Passover was a blasphemous distortion of the mercy and grace of God which Jesus had been sent to earth to make a reality. Jesus' sacrifice was supposed to be presented as a gift. This practice of turning Passover into a lucrative enterprise distorted the meaning of the death He was sent to die.

As Jesus turned over the tables, He pronounced His condemnation on the practices by quoting from two passages from Isaiah and Jeremiah by which the LORD had condemned previous generations. I have underlined the parts He quoted. The Jewish religious leaders would have been familiar with these passages:

Isaiah 56:6-7 “And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant-- these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

Jeremiah 7:11 “Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.”

I have to wonder why the Jewish leaders didn't call on the Temple guard to stop what Jesus was doing. I believe the reason was that they were afraid of what the crowds would do if they interfered with Jesus. After Jesus overturned the tables, He continued in the Temple:

Matthew 21:14 **The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.**

Even in Jesus' miracles, there was a shadow meaning. Healing the lame showed that Jesus could purify one's walk or way of life. Healing the blind showed that Jesus could shed the light of truth on the darkness on human hearts.

Matthew 21:15 **But when the chief priests (*High Priests*) and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.**

The “hosannas” were a continuation of the “hosannas” which had been cried out by the huge mass of people who had crowded around Jesus on the road from Bethany earlier on that Sunday. It is taken from Psalm 118:25a.

Matthew 21:16-17 **“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him. “Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read, “From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise’?” And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.**

Here Jesus quoted from Psalm 8 which was written to describe the promised Messiah. For your edification I have inserted below a detailed study of that wonderful Psalm.

Psalms 8

The Messianic nature of this Psalm is marked by three of its verses. Verse 2 was quoted by Christ during His last days in Jerusalem as we saw just above where Jesus said it was prophetic of Him. You may also remember from our study of Psalm 118, that the Hosannas on this last Passover gathering had been ordained by God. Besides that, verse 5 of this Psalm was quoted in Hebrews as speaking of Christ:

Hebrews 2:6-9 (in corrected translation) “But there is a place where someone (*David*) has testified: ‘What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than God, you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.’ In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was for a short time lower than God, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”

Besides that, verse 6 of that passage is also quoted in 1 Corinthians 15:27 as speaking of Christ: 1 Corinthians 15:27 “For he ‘has put everything under his (*Christ’s*) feet.’”

Psalm 8

For the director of music. According to gittith. A psalm of David.

This superscription contains a musical instruction that indicates that the Psalm was originally to be sung to the music of a “gittith” which seems to have been a type of small handheld harp that the Israelites had adopted from the Philistine people of Gath. This musical instruction also occurs in Psalms 81 and 84. This Psalm and the other two, both by tradition and content of the Psalm were usually sung by pilgrims going up to Jerusalem and the Temple for the Feasts, so it was useful that the instrument which was to accompany it could be easily carried along as it was played.

We know that in the Psalms written by David, it was the Holy Spirit that was speaking through David:

Matthew 22:43-44 “He (*Jesus*) said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’”

We also know that this Psalm was about the coming Messiah who was Jesus Christ. At the time he wrote the Psalm, David didn’t fully understand what he was writing. However, the Holy Spirit, that spoke through him, did.

Psalms 8:1a O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

We should understand that “the name” that the pilgrims had sung about as they had come to Jerusalem for a thousand years, and “the name” they had sung about when they came to that Passover in 30 AD was the Name above every Name:

Philippians 2:9-11 “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

In the ancient world, the concept of “name” was understood to mean “reputation.” Jesus came to fully establish the full character of the LORD.

Psalms 8:1b ~~You have set~~ Set your glory above the heavens.

In the original Hebrew the word translated by the NIV as “have set” is the qal imperative of the word יָתַן {nä·than'}. Thus, it seems to me, that this might better be translated “Set your glory above the heavens.” This then would be seen as something yet to do. That was precisely the situation on the day when the prophetic meaning of this Psalm was fulfilled in the next verse. Jesus would set His glory above the heavens by what He was about to do on the day of His Crucifixion. I think the phrase “above (*or in*) the heavens” refers to the fact that Jesus death was also meant to be a testimony to all the angels in the heavens.

Psalms 8:2a From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies,

We have just seen how Jesus quoted this Psalm to His enemies before that last Passover. Jesus might as well have said “Have you never heard” since this was a song that many of the pilgrims would have been singing as they had entered Jerusalem and the Temple.

Jesus had spoken before on the fact that so-called “intellectuals” could not understand what a little child with a heart for the LORD could understand:

Matthew 11:25 “At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.”

Psalm 8 was prophesying that when the Messiah came to the Temple, His enemies would be the High Priests. They should have been praising Him. Instead, it was left to the little children.

Psalms 8:2b to silence the foe and the avenger.

Jesus did not quote the rest of this verse to the High Priests and teachers of the law. He didn't have to because they could have finished the familiar refrain for themselves. The words “foe and the avenger” are both in the singular person. Those whom Jesus addressed that day in the Temple were all His foes and were plotting to wreak personal vengeance on Jesus. They were all also doing the work of their spiritual “father” the greater foe and avenger, Satan himself.

Psalms 8:3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

This considers the immense power of God. It describes the entire immeasurable universe as mere “finger work” for God. This power of God is what Satan covets.

In the next verse, “the son of Man” is “him.” Yet in this verse, the “heavens” and the “fingers” which created them are “yours.” Yet we know that both the “you” and the “he” are the same person, Jesus Christ. It was Jesus (in His pre-incarnate person) who created the Heavens and the Earth. Colossians 1:15-16 “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.” It was also Jesus who would be “the son of Man.” When Psalm 8 was written, about a thousand years before the virgin birth of Jesus, there was as yet no “son of Man” in human time. Chronologically speaking the “Son of man” did not yet exist. However, at that time Jesus existed as the second person of the Trinity. It was He who created the universe.

Psalms 8:4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

Remember, we know that this was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Its meaning could not be fully understood until the Passover of Christ’s crucifixion. This verse asks two questions.

The first question is “What is man that you are mindful of him.”

This is certainly the question that Satan and much of the world can never comprehend. Given God’s power, they ask, why would God trouble to save mankind, given what it would cost Him? Given power and status, Satan and the rulers of this world would never consider being “servants” of those subject to their power. Yet such is not God’s attitude toward mankind:

Matthew 20:28 “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The second question is “What is the son of man that you care for Him.”

Of course, we know that the “son of man” in question here is Jesus Christ. Along with the verse from Matthew just above, Jesus called Himself the “Son of Man” 31 times in Matthew alone. The Hebrew word which is translated “care for” is פָּקַד {pä·kad’}. It also has the meaning of “pay attention to,” or “to observe.” So, the question is - Why was the “Son of Man” the centerpiece of the Father’s plan? The next verse gave more information on the “Son of Man” who wouldn’t come for more than a thousand Passovers after David. However, on the Passover this was fulfilled He was there among them.

Psalms 8:5a You made him a little for a little while lower than the heavenly beings God

² This phrase also occurs in Psalm 144:3.

Although this was written a thousand years before Christ, the omniscient Holy Spirit could speak of the future as the past. The Hebrew word translated “a little” here is מְעַט {meh·at’}. It can also be understood to mean “shortly” or “for a little while.” I think this is expressing the short 33 years when Jesus’ had laid aside the powers of His deity and lived as a man. The Hebrew word which the NIV translated “heavenly beings” here is אֱלֹהִים {el-o-heem’} which is usually translated “God” (2306 of 2606 in NKJV) or “gods” (244 of 2606 in NKJV). It is only translated “angels” or “heavenly beings” this once.³ I have supplied what I think is the correct translation. The NRSV, ASV, and NAS have “God.” The error seems to have originated from the Septuagint which has ἄγγελος {ä'n-ge-los}.

With the above correct translation of “God,” we see the direct connection to what Paul said about Christ in Philippians:

Philippians 2:5-7 “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

Psalms 8:5b and crowned him with glory and honor.⁴

This also spoke of Jesus’s ascension and session at the right hand of the Father which occurred forty days after His resurrection.

Psalms 8:6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:

You will notice that this also speaks of His rule over all the earth as already accomplished. Again, this is the Holy Spirit speaking of things He saw as already existing because He is not bound by time. However, in Hebrews, Paul, writing on this Psalm, wrote from the human chronological perspective:

Hebrews 2:8b-9 “In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was for a short time lower than God,⁵ now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by

³ *In Hebrews 2:7 this was translated from the original Aramaic in which Hebrews was written. Unfortunately, that original text is lost to us. It was translated into Greek using the word ἄγγελος {ä'n-ge-los} which literally means “messenger,” but is most often understood to mean “messengers of God.” Unfortunately, the Greek Septuagint translated the word אֱלֹהִים {el-ō-hēm’} in this Psalm using ἄγγελος {ä'n-ge-los} which probably accounted for a mistaken transcription in the Book of Hebrews when it was translated from its original Aramaic into the Greek version that we have.*

⁴ *This passage was quoted in Hebrews 2:6-9*

⁵ *This word in the text of Hebrews was also “God” rather than angels. See previous footnote a.*

the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”

Psalms 8:7-8 all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

The dominion of all the creatures of the earth, which existed in the Garden for the First Adam, will be restored to the Second Adam, who is Jesus Christ. At that time, all animals will be tame and evidently all creatures will be vegetarians:

Isaiah 11:6-9 “The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.⁶ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest.⁷ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

Psalms 8:9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

This repeats the opening verse of the Psalm. The majesty of the name of the LORD will be established by Him for all to see. Among other names He is also “Emmanuel,” “Jesus,” and “the Lamb of God.” Revelation records the future recognition of His merits by every creature then in His Heaven and Earth:

Revelation 5:12-13 “In a loud voice they sang: ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!’ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’”

Returning to the Gospel Accounts of Events after Jesus entered Jerusalem

Matthew 21:10-11 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Undoubtedly, some of the crowds who had been out on the road also entered the city, and soon everyone had heard what had happened.

Mark 11:11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late,⁸ he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

⁶ See Isaiah 65:25.

⁷ This is one of the verses that indicates there will be babies born in the Millennium.

Mark didn't include the turning over of the tables on Sunday evening or anything that happened in the Temple that day. He probably wasn't an eyewitness. At the time he was a young man living with his parents and a resident of Jerusalem. He was evidently either not a full-time disciple or he had spent the night with his parents. Perhaps he couldn't join Jesus and the disciples until they were leaving the Temple.

Luke 19:47a ~~Every day he was teaching at the temple~~ **He taught by day in the Temple.**

I have substituted the literal Greek translation: "He taught by day in the Temple." The emphasis here is that He did not hide but taught openly by day. The incorrect English translation "every day he was teaching" would call into question my chronology which indicates that he only appeared twice in the Temple, on Sunday and Monday. The NIV translation would suggest that he also taught on Tuesday which did not happen.

Luke 19:47b-48 ~~But the chief priests~~ **High Priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.**

The High Priests (Annas and Caiaphas) were seeking to kill Jesus from the very first day, but they could never find Him isolated away from the crowds. That was why they needed Judas to tell them where and when they could find Him isolated. Although they probably could have overpowered Jesus' larger group of traveling disciples (about a hundred), they were afraid arresting Jesus in public would have aroused a riot among the hundreds of thousands that were attending the Passover. They knew the Roman authorities, on whom their power relied, would have been very displeased at that, whatever the outcome.

The Second Day of Overturning the Tables

Mark 11:12 **The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.**

This would have been on Monday, the 12th of Nisan.

Mark 11:13-14 **Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him**

⁸ *From Bethphage to the Sheep Gate, the Lord's path wound around and in front of the Mount of Olives for a mile and a half where a good part, if not a majority, of the pilgrims in Jerusalem were camping. As word spread of Christ's arrival they would have flocked down to the road. There were no barricades and no crowd control. The progress must have been glacial. It was probably because of this that Jesus arrived so late into the city that first day.*

⁹ *Micah 7:1, see also Luke 13:9 and its note.*

say it.

Matthew 21:18-19a **Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!”**

In lesson 34 we saw the connection of this event to the parable Jesus had told about the unproductive fig tree. This had been the parable:

Luke 13:6b-9 “A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So, he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ “‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

The Passover Jesus was attending was the fourth during His ministry. He had seen the previous day that the Jews were still an unfruitful tree, who rejected His Gospel. When He cursed the tree, He was pronouncing the end of the nation Israel as the tree which would bear the fruit. Henceforward it would be the Church which was grafted onto the root of Israel.

Mark 11:15-16 **On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.¹⁰**

Mark recorded this overturning of the tables on Monday morning. Matthew and Luke had indicated that a similar action was taken on the previous evening (Sunday). John didn’t record the action at all. Clearly Jesus must have overturned the tables both on late Sunday, and on Monday morning.

Mark 11:17 **And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: “‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’?”¹¹ But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’^{12”}**

Notice Jesus had called the High Priests “robbers.” Nothing stings more than the truth. The following was written 30 years later by Josephus about one of them (Annas): “But as for the high priest, Ananias (Annas) he increased in glory every day, -- for he was a great hoarder up of money -- he also had servants who were very wicked, who joined themselves to the boldest sort

¹⁰ *The mention of other merchandise seems to indicate that the High Priests had taken advantage of the large crowds in Jerusalem to turn the Temple Mount into a market for foodstuffs and supplies for the pilgrims.*

¹¹ *Isaiah 56:7*

¹² *Jeremiah 7:11.*

of the people, and went to the thrashing-floors, and took away the tithes that belonged to the priests by violence, and did not refrain from beating such as would not give these tithes to them. So, the other High Priests acted in the like manner, as did those his servants, without any one being able to prohibit them; so that priests, that of old were wont to be supported with those tithes, died for want of food.” Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, BOOK XX. CHAPTER 9. Verse 2.

Mark 11:18 **The chief priests (*High Priests*) and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.**

Mark has the most detailed chronology of these days from among the three synoptic Gospels. According to Mark this finalization of the Sanhedrin’s plot against Jesus took place on Monday. Matthew and Luke also mentioned the resolution of the Jewish leaders to kill Him while they recorded Jesus’ prophecy of the end times which He gave on Monday evening.

Mark 11:19 **When evening came, they went out of the city.**

Scripture tells us that this night they spent on the Mt. of Olives, not at Bethany.¹³ As Jesus had approached Jerusalem from Bethany on Monday, He had cursed the fig tree. This tree must have been very close to Jerusalem and far from Bethany. We can draw this conclusion because we know that He spent that night on the Mount of Olives, and the next morning (Tuesday) He and His disciples passed the fig tree on the way in to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives (possibly from the Garden of Gethsemane).¹⁴ When they reached the Temple He totally disrupted the money making endeavors of the High Priests. The money changing enterprise was large enough to serve hundreds of thousands of people, so this was not the action of turning over a few small tables. It would have taken a long time. I have to wonder if the money changers had the nerve to set up shop again while Jesus was still in the Temple. When Jesus was through with that, He began to teach. This took the whole day.

An Applicable Old Testament Passage from Micah

There are clear parallels between the situation and thinking of Micah in his time and the situation and thinking of Jesus as He faced His arrest that night and His crucifixion the following day.

¹³ *Luke 21:37 “Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives.” Also, Luke 22:39.*

¹⁴ *The Garden of Gethsemane is not mentioned until the last night. It is possible that they had changed campsites after the first night to keep their location secret. However, on that night they had chosen their campsite before returning to the city for the Last Supper.*

Micah 7:1 What misery is mine! I am like one who gathers summer fruit at the gleaning of the vineyard; there is no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave.

While verse 7 of this chapter can make it sound like the voice here is the voice of the prophet Micah, I believe this is written in the voice of Christ, like many of the Davidic Messianic Psalms. Jesus had preached powerfully to the people of His time. If the people had listened to His preaching it would have produced spiritual fruit. Instead there was none. Like most of the Old Testament prophets Jesus had to suffer the disappointment of teaching to a people with hard hearts. On the day before His arrest, Christ used a similar analogy of no fruit on the tree to illustrate the response to His ministry in Matthew 21:19 and Mark 11:13-14.

Micah 7:2 The godly have been swept from the land; not one upright man remains. All men lie in wait to shed blood; each hunts his brother with a net.

The leadership of the people was intent on killing Jesus.

Micah 7:3-4a Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire-- they all conspire together. The best of them is like a brier, the most upright worse than a thorn hedge.

Greed was the benchmark of their leaders. There was no justice and mercy in the land because there was no love of God.

Micah 7:4b The day of your watchmen has come, the day God visits you.

The “watchmen of Israel” were those who were to warn Israel when they failed to walk in the LORD. Micah was one of those good “watchmen.”¹⁵ The LORD said of the faithful watchmen of Israel in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 6:17-19 “I appointed watchmen over you (*Israel*) and said, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But you said, ‘We will not listen.’ Therefore hear, O nations; observe, O witnesses, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law.”

This was just saying that the long-promised judgment that the watchmen had warned about was about to descend on them. It was also the day that God visited them in the person of their Messiah.

Micah 7:4c Now is the time of their confusion.

¹⁵ However, there were false prophets and teachers who came to predominate in those days. Isaiah said of them: Isaiah 56:10 “Israel’s watchmen are blind, they all lack knowledge; they are all mute dogs, they cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep.”

The confusion would belong to those who were wicked.

Micah 7:5-6 Do not trust a neighbor; put no confidence in a friend. Even with her who lies in your embrace be careful of your words. For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- a man's enemies are the members of his own household.

The character of the people became so corrupted that a believer could trust no one. In Matthew Jesus quoted this passage as also describing His time:

Matthew 10:34-36 “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.’”

Micah 7:7 But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.

Like Joshua in an earlier day,¹⁶ Jesus (in Aramaic the name “Jesus” was “Joshua”) resolved to stand against the tide of unbelief in his time. Jesus’ hope was fixed on the LORD God who would also be his savior.

As is noted often in the Messianic Psalms Jesus had to rely on the salvation and deliverance of the Father. It was He who delivered Jesus from the grave “because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.”(Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:27) Also, in Psalms 89:26 it speaks of the son of David, first born son of the Father, ruler of the earth as addressing God as “my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.”(see also Psalms 118:14, 18:46, 38:22, 68:19,

Micah 7:8 Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit *abide* in darkness,¹⁷ the LORD will be my light.

Jesus would persevere in his faith despite the hatred and betrayal that was poured out on Him. Despite everything His faith in the LORD never wavered.

Micah 7:9 Because I have sinned against him, I will bear the LORD's wrath, until he pleads my case and establishes my right. He will bring me out into the light; I will see his righteousness.

¹⁶ Joshua 24:15 “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, ---- but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

¹⁷ The tomb.

This is not alone among the Messianic passages (see also Psalms 38:18, Psalms 39:8, Psalms 40:12, Psalms 41:4, Psalms 69:5, Psalms 89:32) where Jesus (the sinless) associates Himself with the sins of mankind because He is the son of Adam who will pay for them. 2 Corinthians 5:21 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Romans 4:25 “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” 1 Peter 2:24 “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been `healed.”

Micah 7:10a Then my enemy will see it and will be covered with shame, she who said to me, “Where is the LORD your God?”

You will remember that world religion is often personified as a “she” as with the woman of Babylon in Revelation 17:5-6 and Zechariah 5:7. The unbelieving people of Israel are also identified in the feminine.¹⁸ Similarly, in this passage the accusation “Where is the LORD your God?” is made by a “she.”

Micah 7:10b My eyes will see her downfall; even now she will be trampled underfoot like mire in the streets.

This speaks of the destruction of world religion described in Revelation:

Revelation 14:8b “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

See also Revelation 17 and 18 which describe her complete destruction.

Micah 7:11 The day for building your walls will come, the day for extending your boundaries.

This now returns to the assurance that the true people of Israel would still receive the fulfillment of the promises the LORD had made.

Time –4/2/30 AD, 13 Nisan Monday

¹⁸ *Example: Jeremiah 3:6-9 “During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, “Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. I thought that after she had done all this, she would return to me, but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. Because Israel’s immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood.”*

Teaching in the Temple on Monday

It is worth noting that the events which took place on Monday morning and early afternoon are all recorded in the same order in all three Gospels, although some of the lessons in some Gospels are left out of others.

The Jewish Leaders Question Jesus' Authority

When Jesus arrived on Monday morning and had overturned the tables again the first thing the High Priests asked him was where He got the authority to have done “these things.” Their biggest money day would have been on Tuesday when many of the pilgrims would want to buy the lambs to be sacrificed the next day. That may be one reason they wanted to make sure Jesus was arrested.

Matthew 21:23 **Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the ~~chief priests~~ High Priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?”**

Mark 11:27-28 **They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the ~~chief priests~~ High Priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you authority to do this?”**

Luke 20:1-2 **One day ¹⁹ as he was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel, the ~~chief priests~~ High Priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things,” they said. “Who gave you this authority?”**

Notice that even the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas were present there, along with other members of the Sanhedrin (elders), to challenge Jesus. They represented the highest religious authority in Judaism. It is as if they meant to intimidate Jesus (who was God Incarnate) by their persons and office. This was the first recorded time when the High Priests had confronted Jesus in person. Before, they had always sent others to confront Him. From now on, they were very personally involved in Jesus' arrest and His trial. They even went all the way to personally watch His crucifixion and death.

Matthew 21:24-26a **Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?”**

¹⁹ *This was on Monday.*

Mark 11:29-30 Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!”

Luke 20:3-4 He replied, “I will also ask you a question. Tell me, John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or from men?”

I think Edersheim’s comment on this is very illuminating:

Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah Book 5, Chapter 3 “As His words are generally understood, they would have amounted only to silencing His questioners, and that, in a manner which would, under ordinary circumstances, be scarcely regarded as either fair or ingenuous. It would have been simply to turn the question against themselves, and so in turn to raise popular prejudice. But the Lord’s words meant quite other. He did answer their question, though He also exposed the cunning and cowardice which prompted it. To the challenge for His authority, and the dark hint about Satanic agency, He replied by an appeal to the Baptist. He had borne full witness to the Mission of Christ from the Father, and ‘all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.’ Were they satisfied? What was their view of the Baptism in preparation for the Coming of Christ? No? They would not or could not answer! If they said the Baptist was a prophet, this implied not only the authorization of the Mission of Jesus, but the call to believe on Him. On the other hand, they were afraid publicly to disown John! And so, their cunning and cowardice stood out self-condemned, when they pleaded ignorance, a plea so grossly and manifestly dishonest, that Christ, having given what all must have felt to be a complete answer, could refuse further discussion with them on this point.”

To further clarify. The Jews were in effect asking Jesus (in modern parlance), “So what seminary did you graduate from and what degrees do you have to claim the authority to teach?” The Jews of that time required the endorsement of, or years of study under, a great teacher like Hillel or Gamaliel as the equivalent of a modern degree. Jesus had the endorsement of one the people regarded as a great teacher, John the Baptist. So, He asked the Jews what they thought of John the Baptist. If they replied that he was a great teacher, then Jesus had His answer to their question. He should have had all the authority the Jewish rulers needed by means of the endorsement of John the Baptist. They saw they were trapped, because they were afraid to admit that they had rejected John’s teaching because John was popular with the crowds.

Matthew 21:25b-27a They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Mark 11:31-33a They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men’” (They feared the

people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.) So, they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Luke 20:5-7 They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.” So, they answered, “We don’t know where it was from.”

The High Priests realized the trap that Jesus had set for them and tried to back out of it gracefully without either offending the crowd or giving Jesus the authorization to teach. This also certainly indicates how much they were uncertain of how the people would react if they tried to arrest Jesus and have Him crucified. They were even afraid to repudiate John the Baptist.

Matthew 21:27b Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

Mark 11:33b Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

Luke 20:8 Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

Jesus’ answer left the High Priests flummoxed, but they did not withdraw.

Parable of the Two Sons

The next parable told by Jesus wasn’t recorded in the Gospels of Mark or Luke which were primarily written for the Gentiles and written twenty or thirty years later. However, both this and the succeeding parables were addressed to the High Priests and elders whom Jesus had just finished challenging about John the Baptist. It must have enraged them that Jesus, this carpenter, had the gall to presume to teach the “High Priests”

Matthew 21:28-29 “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

The first son spoke of the tax collectors and prostitutes who at least acknowledged that their sin was dearer to them than the will of God and honestly and openly said “No!” Later when they saw the consequences of their sin and God’s forgiveness they honestly said “Yes!”

Matthew 21:30 “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

The second son spoke of the High Priests and elders who spent all their time in a hypocritical worship without ever doing the real will of God.

Matthew 21:31a **“Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered.**

There seem to have been some among the elders who gave the obvious answer. I suspect Annas and Caiaphas kept a hostile silence.

Matthew 21:31b-32 **Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.**

Jesus wasn't afraid to tell the High Priest and elders, who He was addressing, that many of the prostitutes were closer to God than they were.

The Parable of the Vineyard

Matthew 21:33 **“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers²⁰ and went away on a journey.**

Mark 12:1 **He then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.**

Luke 20:9 **He went on to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time.**

Jesus was drawing an analogy to the Holy Land of Israel. The land was the vineyard which God (the landowner) had planted to produce wine. He had established the vineyard (the wall). He had given it all the means to produce (the winepress). He had given them the means to protect the vineyard from robbers (the watchtower).²¹ He had left the vineyard in the care of farmers (the Jews) expecting it to produce.

Matthew 21:34-36 **When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. “The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more²² than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.**

²⁰ According to verse 45, the farmers were the spiritual leaders of Israel, the Pharisees and the Sadducees (and the High Priests).

²¹ See Isaiah 5:2. A watchtower was used to warn impending threats. This is speaking of the word of God which God had given to Israel.

²² According to Edersheim this should be understood as “greater (in authority),” rather than “more” as rendered here.

Mark 12:2-5 **At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.**

Luke 20:10-12 **At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.**

The fruit of the vineyard owed to the landowner would have been the rent for the land agreed on beforehand. In Israel's case it would have been obedience to God's word. Here Jesus was drawing on the history of Israel even to include John the Baptist. He had previously told the spies of the Sanhedrin what He thought of them:

Luke 11:43-44, 48-50 "Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. 'Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it. --- So, you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.'²³ Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world."

Matthew 21:37-39 **Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So, they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.**

Mark 12:6-8 **"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' "But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So, they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.**

Luke 20:13-15a **"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.' "But when the tenants saw him, they talked the**

²³ 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 "The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy."

matter over. ‘This is the heir,’ they said. ‘Let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So, they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

The son of the owner represented Jesus Christ and the tenants represented Annas and Caiaphas and the elders who stood before Jesus. As we see later, they fully understood that Jesus was talking about them. They also must have wondered that Jesus foresaw that they intended to kill Him and yet He had come into the Temple to confront them.

Matthew 21:40-41 “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

Mark 12:9 “What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

Luke 20:15b-16 “What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When the people heard this, they said, “May this never be!”

For the Jews, the wretched end included the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and the subsequent banishment of Jews from the Holy land altogether in 136 AD after the Bar Kokhba revolt. Annas himself lived to be over 90 only to be murdered by the Jews in about 67 AD. The “others” to whom the “vineyard” was given referred to the Church which would begin about 56 days later on Pentecost. It included all the Gentiles and Jews who would believe.

Relevant Old Testament Passage.

Isaiah 5:1 I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.

Isaiah 5 expands on the concept of the fruit of the vineyard established in Isaiah 4:2. Since Jesus Christ referred to this concept when He came, it is indirectly Messianic, however, the consequences of being the bad vineyard led to both the proximate destruction of Jerusalem in 585 BC and the more distant destruction in 70 AD.

You will note the similarity of this song to the Song of Songs which is also about Jesus Christ, the true “Solomon” of that Book (Solomon means “peace”).

Isaiah 5:2 He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.

Jesus Christ used this figure and connected it to His coming numerous times. A prime example is found in our passages above where Jesus addressed the High Priests and the elders during His last day in the Temple. They must have been well aware of this passage.

Isaiah 5:3 “Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

Notice how in verses 1-2 the vineyard owner (God) is spoken of in the third person (he). In verses 3-6 the vineyard owner is spoken of in the first person (I). In verse 7 it switches back to the third person, although in all cases it is speaking of the same person. This is not uncommon in Old Testament prophecy when speaking of the LORD. You need to be alert to these changes.

Isaiah 5:4 What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”

This prophecy was first fulfilled in 585 BC at the time of the Babylonian exile: Jeremiah 25:11 “This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”

Israel was destined for the same fate in 70 AD after they had rejected Christ. In both cases the LORD brought prolonged droughts in the Land of Promise which kept the land relatively empty. In 585 BC the drought only lasted about 40 years. After 70 AD, the weather changed dramatically and has remained that way for almost 2000 years. Roman records show that in the 1st Century Judea and Galilee were major exporters of fruit and grains, to the extent that some archaeologists claim the amounts must have been grossly inflated. They base their doubts on what the weather that is in effect now in Israel could produce. However, we also should take note that when the Jews began to move back into Israel in the early 20th century, they found a land that was very sparsely populated.

Isaiah 5:7 The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

This serves to confirm that the LORD was using a vineyard as a figure for Israel and Judah.