

## They Perceived That He Spake of Them

### **Matthew 21:18 – 22:14**

=====

~ Our Spiritual Safari left Jerusalem with the Lord Jesus and the apostles in our last report and retreated to Bethany to spend the night. We saw the so-called Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem by the Lord Jesus which, when we considered it in its proper, correct and complete Biblical focus with a Scripturally historical precedent for interpretation in this present moment in reality, we concluded that it wasn't much of a triumph. The Lord Jesus had come to die on the cross for our sins and, friends, that is just not a triumph on this safari. You can find that false teaching in many other places – not here. This is unleavened bread we eat out here in the bush. If you have not read our last report then I can only suggest you go back and do so now. We also examined each of the three separate times the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem this way in our previous report. Each of the three days Jesus entered Jerusalem He also went back out - and would not stay overnight in the city. I have always found that intriguing....

### **XXI**

***18 Now in the morning as Jesus returned into the city, he hungered.***

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

***20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!***

~ There has been great difficulty throughout the years interpreting this fig tree. I have heard the fig tree referred to as many different things. Well, the fig tree is symbolic of the nation Israel. We see the same thing in the Olivet Discourse in chapter twenty-four of Matthew, and consistency is the key when considering Holy Writ completely. Of course, even then, the interpretation of exactly what the fig tree really means remains

controversial and differing. I think we can say very definitely that when Jesus arrived on earth there was no fruit on the tree that is the nation Israel. Only the few leaves of a nation with an outward religion remained at this time in which we are studying. They had all the form for a ritual but they denied the Power of God.

That was the outward emptiness of the Pharisee's and Sadducee's - but the meaningfulness of their religions were as dead and empty as a lifeless human body; and it is exactly what Jesus is condemning in them. This chapter and the next contain condemnation that cannot be mistaken; so, the only responsible and logical or reasonable determination must be that the fig tree is the nation Israel in this account. The nation had lost its vitality and virility and was no longer accomplishing the purpose of God. That's their condition today as I type and as you read this report. Here, we have a fruit tree that is not accomplishing its purpose; and I feel very definitely this is the same way that God will deal with the organized church that has utterly turned their back on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Jesus curses the fig tree and we're observing that curse in a spiritually symbolic fashion. Certainly, Jesus pronounces judgment on Israel; and Israel is judged. Of course, the tree withering right before their very eyes was an amazing sight to them; probably a bit eerie....

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

***22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.***

~ When the apostles asked themselves how this tree could pass away so quickly the Lord gives a lesson in prayer! Jesus is also saying He is disappointed that the disciples don't have enough faith to believe He could move in such a miraculous way. Our business today isn't cursing fig trees or moving mountains, though, my beloved. We don't have any mountains here in Florida - and I don't really want any cluttering up our beaches. David asked, "...shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills?" Of course, David knew his

help wasn't coming from the hills and, even so, David never wanted to move any of them!

Jesus is attempting to teach the apostles something much deeper than mountain moving or killing trees. That bigger thing is to preach the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus Christ and to get out the Word of God in SOUND teaching of THIS doctrine, to the entire world – and to have the Spirit of God actually use it! To me, that is a much more worthy purpose in life. If my lips of clay can say something that the Spirit of God can take and transform a life with, well, that's the kind of faith I want. I must confess, I wonder how in the world ANY of my works can really be used by God. What takes me all day to produce reads through in about fifteen minutes. Some people have told me I only do this to bolster my own faith, too. Well, I'm not going to argue with that at all; but what I will argue is that the fig tree ONLY fits and represents the nation Israel in these parables - nothing else....

***23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?***

***24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.***

***25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?***

***26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.***

~ The religious rulers are now becoming very ugly and hateful in their defensive mannerisms and speech. Nobody is questioning the healings that Jesus is doing – we need to note that. If there were ANY basis whatsoever by which they could have denied the miracles that Jesus was performing – they would have. They are ONLY interested by what authority Jesus was

teaching. Any time you put the Lord Jesus on the horns of a dilemma you need to prepare yourself to be confused – and deeply hurtfully insulted. So many self-professing believers are going to be stunned in that day when Jesus says to them, “I never knew you.”

The Pharisees didn't really even want an answer concerning Jesus' authoritativeness; they are only trying to trap Him in a bungled theology now. Answering their question with a question forces the Pharisees to examine their own question carefully. That, in turn, causes them to realize that He knows the evil motives of their heart. This is what we call getting down to business with the Lord Jesus Christ, friends. Of course, if the Pharisees had answered and said, “...by Heaven” - then Jesus would have said that was His authority. The Pharisees were not about to tell this crowd that John had done things by anything OTHER than the authority of Heaven. They were simply hell-bent on rejecting the authoritative basis that Jesus was declaring He was doing these miracles by. They secretly won't accept John the Baptist's authority as being from Heaven; and they're not about to accept Jesus' authority as being from God Himself, either. As you can see this is culminating into one scathing denunciation by Jesus of the religious rulers of the nation Israel. When Jesus places the position of publicans and harlots above that of the Pharisees - they see red. Jesus is really going to get ugly with these people now....

***27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.***

***28 But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.***

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

***30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.***

***31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.***

~ When Jesus said that the Pharisees shifted in their seats and gasped for air. The religious rulers are the other son that said they would go but didn't. These religious rulers had an immediate revelation; but absolutely no response in their hearts. We can make application for this today very easily. Many people join the church or play along here with us on safari saying they believe in Jesus. They act as pious as a dill pickle, and they genuinely but erroneously think they're Christians - but they're not. I have to believe that, at least some, unsaved church members are becoming saved from reading these reports and having the Holy Spirit speak to their hearts, however harshly. I see many people grasping and reaching out for something they can hold on to; they're looking for SOUND doctrine in these dark and desperate days. If all you have is an outward religion, friends – and it's not something that is changing your heart, thinking and life – I suggest you look to the words of the Lord Jesus today and get your problems straightened out with Him immediately! The Pharisees were religious; but it was all an outward show. Their entire state of being was nothing but an external hypocrisy. Religion is an exterior decoration. It is very deceiving. A personal relationship with Christ is interior – but it cannot be hidden; and if you have a personal relationship with Christ your interior is not only going to change – it's going to become new....

***32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.***

***33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:***

***34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.***

***35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.***

**36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.**

**37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.**

**38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.**

**39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.**

**40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?**

**41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.**

~ This poignant parable about Israel should have really dug into these religious rulers once they took a moment to think about it; but I doubt it did. I think they immediately dismissed it wholesale. This will be the final warning to the nation Israel and to them. The last person sent in this parable was the Son – and the Son was right there giving them the very parable of which He spoke. They knew what Jesus was talking about; He had made it crystal clear for them. Jesus is telling them in this parable what was in their hearts at that very moment, and He knew that, because of His words, they wanted to kill Him. This is what the Pharisees had been planning to do since the incident in the corn field with the apostles, you may recall. I'm sure the Pharisees were startled when the Lord Jesus sent them back to the Old Testament to make Himself the Stone! ~

**42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?**

**43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**

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

~ Let's notice the change from the term, the Kingdom of Heaven, to the Kingdom of God here. I think this even larger term is used because Jesus is getting ready to include the Gentiles - and anyone else - who will come to Him. The nation Jesus is speaking of giving the Kingdom to is the church in the world today – the True and Living Church. If you turn to Christ Jesus then He is the Rock on which you will be broken. It isn't a maybe. It's a promise. This speaks of His First Advent. This is the rock on which the church is built that no man could have laid the foundation for except Him. If we come and rest on Him by faith He will save us; if you reject him then the stone falls upon you and you'll have to deal with Jesus at His Second Advent. Christ is the stone that Daniel said is cut out without hands. This is the same stone that shall smite the enemy – specifically, grind them to powder. The Pharisees here know what the Lord Jesus is talking about. I wish more people today could see this is written to them and, particularly, those who are in the church.....

***45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.***

***46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.***

~ As we enter chapter twenty-two the religious rulers have already determined to kill Jesus; they just can't get their hands on Him yet because they are afraid of the crowd. Well, Jesus is going to end this verbal clash with the Pharisees here and now. The following parable of the king that made a marriage feast is a continuation to the answer the Lord Jesus was giving in chapter twenty-one; but it's also fuel on the fire of abject hate and disdain towards Him by the Pharisees. This parable may be the greatest we have for this day in which we live. In the last two parables, Jesus did not use the term, "Kingdom of Heaven" – but in this chapter we're back to the Kingdom of Heaven. The reason is because this parable parallels those from

chapter thirteen and deals with how and why this age of grace began; and does not deal with its conclusion....

## XXII

***1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,***

***2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,***

***3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to the wedding: and they would not come.***

***4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.***

***5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise:***

***6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.***

~ This is a direct reference to Himself and a prophecy about how they would kill Him. Verse seven will come up again in chapter twenty-four where we find out about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus the Roman. I feel this is a specific prophecy of that coming destruction. His methodology is also a stark change to the method and manner of the message and how the message is to go out in this present age where we are right now....

***7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.***

***8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.***



***9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.***

***10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.***

***11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:***

***12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.***

***13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.***

***14 For many are called, but few are chosen.***

~ The invitation to the wedding has gone out today, too. The invitation is for everyone to come, even Israel. The danger is coming to the wedding without meeting the demands of the King! The wedding garment is the righteousness of Christ; and it is absolutely non-negotiable that you wear it at this wedding. It's supplied to all who believe – we just have to put it on. Apparently, there was one man that had slipped in without picking up that garment. Well, that man won't be slipping out - he's going out hog-tied to be cast into utter darkness. That would be the dungeon in the castle – it is very dark down there. I'm sure he was speechless when confronted by the king. I hear how people say they are going to figure it out at the end and that they'll take their chances with an explanation to God. What fools! This man didn't say a word because he didn't have the commanded wedding attire. The man COULD have had the wedding attire but he chose not to. The call has gone out to everyone today; but you'll come to God on His terms or you won't come. If you do come on your own terms you won't be staying very long. That's what God says, my beloved.

The Herodian will now come to Jesus questioning the payment of tribute to Caesar as we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. The Sadducee comes to Jesus with a question about the resurrection; which they don't even believe in. The scribes and Pharisees come to Jesus with technical questions about the law. So many questions. In our next report we will see the Lord Jesus finish answering these religious rulers; and His way of dealing with the enemy is the greatest proof of His deity that we have. We're going to see the most marvelous thing we can possibly see about the Lord Jesus Christ in our next report ~

=====