

John Wesley's Explanatory Notes - Matthew 21

by John Wesley

John Wesley's sermon explores the significance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, His cleansing of the temple, and the rejection of His authority through parables.

Topics: "True Worship", "Humility of Christ"

Description

John Wesley expounds on Matthew 21, emphasizing the humility of Jesus as he enters Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling prophetic scripture and demonstrating that true kingship is marked by peace rather than worldly power. He highlights the significance of the crowd's acclamations of 'Hosanna' and their subsequent rejection of Jesus, illustrating the fickleness of public opinion and the importance of genuine faith. Wesley also discusses Jesus' cleansing of the temple, condemning the commercialization of worship and calling for a return to true reverence. He warns against unfruitfulness in faith, using the parable of the vineyard to illustrate God's expectations of His people. Ultimately, Wesley calls for a recognition of Jesus as the cornerstone of faith, urging believers to embrace Him wholeheartedly.

Transcript

XXI. 1. Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29; John 12:12.

Verse 5. The daughter of Sion - That is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem: the first words of the passage are cited from Isaiah 62:11; the rest from Zechariah 9:9. The ancient Jewish doctors were wont to apply these prophecies to the Messiah. On an ass - The Prince of Peace did not take a horse, a warlike animal. But he will ride on that by and by, Revelation 19:11. In the patriarchal ages, illustrious persons thought it no disgrace to make use of this animal: but it by no means appears, that this opinion prevailed, or this custom continued, till the reign of Tiberias. Was it a mean attitude wherein our Lord then appeared? Mean even to contempt! I grant it: I glory in it: it is for the comfort of my soul for the honour of his humility, and for the utter confusion of all worldly pomp and grandeur.

Verse 7. They set him thereon - That is, on the clothes.

Verse 8. A great multitude spread their garments in the way - A custom which was usual at the creation of a king, 2 Kings 9:13.

Verse 9. The multitudes cried, saying - Probably from a Divine impulse; for certainly most of them understood not the words they uttered. Hosanna - (Lord save us) was a solemn word in frequent use

among the Jews. The meaning is, "We sing hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he, the Messiah, of the Lord. Save. Thou that art in the highest heavens." Our Lord restrained all public tokens of honour from the people till now, lest the envy of his enemies should interrupt his preaching before the time. But this reason now ceasing, he suffered their acclamations, that they might be a public testimony against their wickedness, who in four or five days after cried out, Crucify him, crucify him. The expressions recorded by the other evangelists are somewhat different from these: but all of them were undoubtedly used by some or others of the multitude.

Verse 11. This is Jesus from Nazareth - What a stumbling block was this! if he was of Nazareth, he could not be the Messiah. But they who earnestly desired to know the truth would not stumble thereat: for upon inquiry (which such would not fail to make) they would find, he was not of Nazareth, but Bethlehem.

Verse 12. He cast out all that sold and bought - Doves and oxen for sacrifice. He had cast them out three years before, John 2:14; bidding them not make that house a house of merchandise. Upon the repetition of the offence, he used sharper words. In the temple - That is, in the outer court of it, where the Gentiles used to worship. The money changers - The exchangers of foreign money into current coin, which those who came from distant parts might want to offer for the service of the temple. Mark 11:11,15; Luke 19:45.

Verse 13. A den of thieves - A proverbial expression, for a harbour of wicked men. Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11.

Verse 16. Psalms 8:2.

Verse 17. Mark 11:11,12.

Verse 20. The disciples seeing it - As they went by, the next day.

Verse 21. Jesus answering, said, If ye have faith - Whence we may learn, that one great end of our Lord in this miracle was to confirm and increase their faith: another was, to warn them against unfruitfulness. Matthew 17:20.

Verse 23. When he was come into the temple, the chief priests came -Who thought he violated their right: and the elders of the people - Probably, members of the sanhedrim, to whom that title most properly belonged: which is the more probable, as they were the persons under whose cognizance the late action of Christ, in purging the temple, would naturally fall. These, with the chief priests, seem purposely to have appeared in a considerable company, to give the more weight to what they said, and if need were, to bear a united testimony against him. As he was teaching -Which also they supposed he had no authority to do, being neither priest, nor Levite, nor scribe. Some of the priests (though not as priests) and all the scribes were authorized teachers. By what authority dost thou these things - Publicly teach the people! And drive out those who had our commission to traffic in the outer court? Luke 20:1; Mark 11:27.

Verse 24. I will ask you one thing - Who have asked me many: The baptism, that is, the whole ministry of John, was it from heaven or from men? - By what authority did he act and teach? Did man or God give him that authority? Was it not God? But if so, the consequence was clear. For John testified that Jesus was the Christ.

Verse 25. Why did ye not believe him - Testifying this.

Verse 27. Neither tell I you - Not again, in express terms: he had often told them before, and they would not believe him.

Verse 30. He answered, I go, sir: but went not - Just so did the scribes and Pharisees: they professed the greatest readiness and zeal in the service of God: but it was bare profession, contradicted by all their actions.

Verse 32. John came in a way of righteousness - Walking in it, as well as teaching it. The publicans and harlots - The most notorious sinners were reformed, though at first they said, I will not. And ye seeing the amazing change which was wrought in them, though at first ye said, I go, sir, repented not afterward - Were no more convinced than before. O how is this scripture fulfilled at this day!

Verse 33. A certain householder planted a vineyard - God planted the Church in Canaan; and hedged it round about - First with the law, then with his peculiar providence: and digged a wine press -Perhaps it may mean Jerusalem: and built a tower - The temple: and went into a far country - That is, left the keepers of his vineyard, in some measure, to behave as they should see good. Mark 12:1; Luke 20:9.

Verse 34. He sent his servants - His extraordinary messengers, the prophets: to the husbandmen - The ordinary preachers or ministers of the Jews.

Verse 41. They say - Perhaps some of the by-standers, not the chief priests or Pharisees; who, as St. Luke relates, said, God forbid, Luke 20:16.

Verse 42. The builders - The scribes and priests, whose office it was to build up the Church. Is become the head of the corner - Or the chief corner stone: he is become the foundation of the Church, on which the whole building rests, and is the principal corner stone, for uniting the Gentiles to it, as the chief corner stone of a house supports and links its two sides together. Psalms 118:22.

Verse 43. Therefore - Because ye reject this corner stone. The kingdom of God - That is, the Gospel.

Verse 44. Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken - Stumblers at Christ shall even then receive much hurt. He is said to fall on this stone, who hears the Gospel and does not believe. But on whomsoever it shall fall - In vengeance, it will utterly destroy him. It will fall on every unbeliever, when Christ cometh in the clouds of heaven. Luke 20:18.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-wesley/john-wesleys-explanatory-notes-matthew-21/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net