

## Matthew Lesson 21

Today we begin with the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard.

Putting this parable in context, Yeshua has been talking to the rich young ruler who had said to Yeshua, "Good Teacher," and Yeshua replied, "Why do you call me good; No one is good except G-d." In saying this, He is letting it be known that He is indeed, G-d.

The very last statement He made before telling the next parable was:

**Matthew 19:30** But many who are first will be last, and the last first...

Then He goes immediately into the following parable:

**Matthew 20:1-16** For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the **third hour** and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, **4** and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. **5** Again he went out about the **sixth** and the **ninth hour**, and did likewise. **6** And about the **eleventh hour** he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' **7** They said to him, '**Because no one hired us.**' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.' **8** So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the **last to the first.**' **9** And when those came who were **hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.** **10** But when the **first came,** they supposed that they would receive more; and **they likewise received each a denarius.** **11** And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, **12** saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' **13** But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. **Did you not agree with me for a denarius?** **14** Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. **15** Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? **Or is your eye evil because I am good?**' **16** So the **last will be first, and the first last.** For many are called, but few chosen.

Though it is common to question if justice was served for the laborers that had worked all day and did not receive more than those who came in at the last hour. Today we are going to look at the parable through the eyes of the landowner who had **Compassion and Justice.** This is really the moral of this parable. Let's see why.



When he came back himself and hired those at the third, sixth and ninth hour. He did not promise a denarius, he promised, "Whatever is right, I will give you."

He finds a way to respect the dignity and self-reliance these men displayed, and hiring them he said, "Whatever is right, you will receive."

Grace was shown by this landowner 5 times. He went back 5 times to hire those who did not have work.

Five is the number of grace.

He could have sent his servant to go from the farm to town, but he went himself! We know that Yeshua came to earth Himself! He, as the landowner, showed grace to us!



I am not only just - I am also merciful and compassionate because mercy and compassion are part of justice.

As it says in the servant songs in Isaiah:

**Isaiah 49:4** But I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and futility; Nevertheless, the justice due to Me is with the LORD, And My reward is with My God.

**Isaiah 50:4-7** The Lord God has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak a word in season to *him who is weary*.

He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.

The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.

I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help Me;

Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.

\*\*Who is this servant who is speaking?

And now Yeshua is going to tell something to His disciples for the **third time:**

**Matthew 20:17-20** Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, **Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.**

Yeshua tells them they are going to Jerusalem. This means they are going up in elevation from where they are, and it means they are making an Aliyah.

"Aliyah" can be thought of in many ways. Aliyah can be when a person is called on to go up and read from the Torah in a service.

"Aliyah can be moving to Israel. It is first used in **Genesis 50:7&14** when Jacob's bones are being carried from Egypt - up to the Land and when all those who had gone up with Joseph were returning.

Moving to Israel is considered an Aliyah, as Israel is thought of as the highest land on earth by Talmudic sages. This height is not by topography, but because Israel is a place of strong connection to the Almighty. The patriarchs lived there and the Temples were there. This is the land where the Son of G-d came to teach, to die and to be resurrected.

Aliyah is thought of as a spiritual elevation, and thinking of this in connection with what Yeshua just said, that **He would be betrayed, condemned to death, handed to**

the Gentiles, mocked, scourged and crucified, and raised from the dead, is amazing when you think about the trials that await Him as He goes up - as He makes Aliyah.

\*\*With this thought in mind, how should we view the trials we go through?

**Matthew 21:1-9** Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, 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.* 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. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 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!

It is very significant that He enters at the Mt. of Olives. This incredible mount is known as the Mount of Anointing because olive trees were in abundance there and produced the olive oil that anointed kings 3,000 years ago.

**Luke 4:18** *The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed....*

**Zechariah 14:4** And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west.....

And now Yeshua begins to unfold to these people that He is bringing prophecy to pass right before their eyes.

He says, ....go and bring the donkey that is tied and the colt with her.

This is fulfilling the prophecy in **Zechariah 9:9** 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.

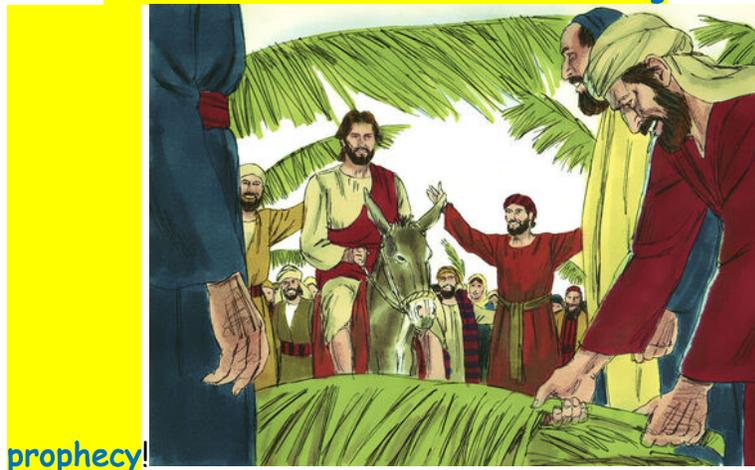
Why did Yeshua ride a donkey? When a new king came on a horse, it signified that he was coming to conquer and coming for war. A donkey let people know that he was coming in peace. A donkey represented the common people and it represented the flesh.

When Yeshua rides a donkey, He is showing that He has conquered the flesh!

\*\*Since we die and are resurrected with Yeshua, what does His riding a donkey, representing the flesh, mean to us?

Now there are multitudes crying out, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed by He who comes in the name of the LORD. Hosanna in the highest!

Another prophecy fulfilled which is also from the Psalms of Ascent. Amazing as He continues his ascent to Jerusalem, the people are crying out a Psalm of Ascent. Their own voices are fulfilling



**Isaiah 11:1-2** There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a (a sprout or shoot which in English is Branch - shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

Nazareth is called "Branch Town"! The Messiah had to come from Nazareth! He is the prophet from Nazareth! **Again...Prophecy fulfilled!**

And as they prepare for Passover, and the very Lamb of God is before them, they cut down branches as they do for Succot! Are they seeing the two comings of the Messiah? Remember, He is riding a donkey, not a horse! He is coming in peace this time; next time, He will come on a horse.

Revelation 19:11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

And it is not over!

Matthew 21:12-17 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. 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.**

Right before their eyes **Isaiah 56:7 and Hosea 6:6 are being fulfilled.**

Isaiah 56:7 I will bring them to My holy mountain and make them joyful 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 the nations.

Matthew 21:14-16 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 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, **Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?'** Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

**Again, prophecy is being fulfilled right before people's eyes! If you were blind, you could even hear it being fulfilled.**

Psalm 8:2 has just been fulfilled. Can we even imagine the excitement of those who knew the signs of the Messiah's first arrival?

**Matthew 21:20-22** In the morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry, and he noticed a fig tree beside the road. He went over to see if there were any figs, but there were only leaves (they had withered away). Then he said to it, **May you never bear fruit again!** And immediately the fig tree withered up. The disciples were amazed when they saw this and asked, "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" Then Jesus told them, **I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea, and it will happen.**

There are many thoughts about what these verses refer to. Clearly, Yeshua is warning and showing that a fruit tree that bears no fruit is useless.

In **Hosea 9:10** I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness, I saw your fathers as the first fruits on the fig tree in its first season, but they went to Baal Peor and separated themselves to that shame; they became an abomination like the thing they loved.

In context all of Hosea 9 is about the judgment of Israel and it ends with these words:

**Hosea 9:17** My God will cast them away because they did not obey Him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

In **Hosea 2:12** again speaking of Israel God says: And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, of which she has said, These are my wages that my lovers have given me. So I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.

And **Jeremiah 8:13** describes the perils of false teaching: I will surely consume them, says the LORD. No grapes shall be on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree and the leaf shall fade; and the things I have given them shall pass away from them.

When Yeshua explains the fig tree dying, He relates it to faith. The false teachers and Pharisees who were challenging Yeshua and trying to trap him are obviously not displaying faith in the Word of G-d, or they would see who Yeshua is.

He is warning those who are more concerned with their own power than with having faith, and at the same time, telling His disciples and those of us who believe, we can expect faith to produce miracles.

**\*\*What is our faith in? Do adverse situations affect our faith? How do we keep our faith steady in spite of adversity?**

Now the very ones He is speaking of question the authority of Yeshua. Is He From heaven or from men? They answered, We do not know. And He said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. (Matthew 21:25&27)

Yeshua now tells two parables relating directly to the ones questioning His authority.

**Matthew 21:28-32** 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 (changed his mind - teshuvah). 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? 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. 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.

The first son refuses to obey, but repented. But second son agrees readily, but doesn't actually obey.

The second son seems to be the scribes and doubting Pharisees. They appear to be doing the work of G-d by appearing religious. But this is not what G-d is looking for. He is looking for faith - Remember Abraham? These leaders are not leading with faith.

Then Yeshua gets right to the point. He had previously asked them a question about John. Now He clearly says, John came to you in righteousness - He was right. He proclaimed that I am the Messiah - the Lamb of God - and you would not believe him. He is telling them they need to repent and believe.

**Matthew 21:33-46** Now listen to another story. A certain landowner planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built an lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to another country. At the time of the grape harvest, he sent his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers grabbed his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. So the landowner sent a larger group of his servants to collect for him, but the results were the same. "Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking, 'Surely they will respect my son.' "But when the tenant farmers saw his son coming, they said to one another, 'Here comes the heir to this estate. Come on, let's kill him

and get the estate for ourselves! So they grabbed him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and murdered him. "When the owner of the vineyard returns," Jesus asked, "what do you think he will do to those farmers?" The religious leaders replied, "He will put the wicked men to a horrible death and lease the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the crop after each harvest." Then Jesus

asked them, "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing, and it is wonderful to see.'

I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit. Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on."

**\*\*The kingdom will be given to people who produce the good fruit, even if they are not part of the religious leaders' circle. This is no longer going to be an exclusive group. -**

**The disciples are not religious leaders - but they would become leaders of the faith in Yeshua as the Messiah,**

Matthew 21:45,46 When the leading priests and Pharisees heard this parable, they realized he was telling the story against them—they were the wicked farmers. They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds, who considered Jesus to be a prophet.

\*\*Of all the prophecies fulfilled in the material we just went through, is there one that jumps out as especially significant to you?

*How has seeing Yeshua fulfill all these prophecies encouraged you?*