

Matthew 21:18-32

Faith, Fear and the Way of Righteousness

The joyous occasion of Yeshua's entrance into the city of Jerusalem, the exploits performed by Him in the Temple Courts, and the prophetic fulfillments of the Prophets spoken hundreds of years prior, presented serious issues for the religious leaders.

In addition to Yeshua's entrance, the shouting of "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest," the scene Yeshua caused by overturning the tables of the moneychangers and driving the merchants from the Temple Courts, infuriated the Chief Priests and scribes.

The teaching opportunities provided by all of the events of the day, and the following day upon Yeshua's return to the city, present tremendous lessons for us on Faith, Fear and the Way of Righteousness.

Yeshua's interactions with His disciples, discourses with the Chief Priests and the elders of the people, and the parable of the man and his sons, reveal some powerful and dynamic lessons taught by Messiah Yeshua.

In the previous teaching, Yeshua fulfilled several prophecies concerning Him from:

- Zechariah
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Psalms

On His way to Jerusalem, Yeshua passed through Bethpage and Bethany.

Bethpage – **967 Βηθφαγή** Bethphage {bayth-fag-ay'} **Meaning:** Bethphage = "house of unripe figs" 1) the name of a hamlet between Jericho and Jerusalem, close to Bethany

Usage: AV - Bethphage 3; 3

Bethpage was known as the house of unripe figs.

Lk 19:29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

Mt 21:17 And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

Mt 21:18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

Mt 21:19 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.

Presently – **3916 παραχρῆμα** parachrema {par-akh-ray'-mah}

Meaning: 1) immediately, forthwith, instantly

Usage: AV - immediately 13, straight way 3, forthwith 1, presently 1, soon 1; 19

According to Mark, Yeshua had cursed the fig tree the day before He went into the Temple and cast out the merchants and the moneychangers; and the following day, as they returned to Jerusalem, the disciples noticed its withered state. Mark adds that the time of the figs were not yet. or the season for the figs to ripen was not yet. Mark 11:22-24

Mk 11:11 And Yeshua entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

Mk 11:12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

Mk 11:13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

Mk 11:14 And Yeshua answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard *it*.

Mk 11:15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Yeshua went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

Mk 11:16 And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

Mk 11:17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Mk 11:18 And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they **feared** him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

Feared – 5399 φοβέω (φοβέομαι) phobeo {fob-eh'-o}

Meaning: 1) to put to flight by terrifying (to scare away) 1a) to put to flight, to flee 1b) to fear, be afraid 1b1) to be struck with fear, to be seized with alarm 1b1a) of those startled by strange sights or occurrences 1b) of those struck with amazement 1b2) to fear, be afraid of one 1b3) to fear (i.e. hesitate) to do something (for fear of harm) 1c) to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience

Usage: AV - fear 62, be afraid 23, be afraid of 5, reverence 1, misc 2; 93

Mk 11:19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

Mk 11:20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

Mk 11:21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

Mk 11:22 And Yeshua answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

Mk 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Mk 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

Mt 21:20 And when the disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

Mt 21:21 Yeshua 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.

Faith – 4102 πίστις pistis {pis'-tis}

Meaning: 1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it 1a) relating to God 1a1) the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Messiah

1b) relating to Messiah 1b1) a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Yeshua is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God

Usage: AV - faith 239, assurance 1, believe + 1537 1, belief 1, them that believe 1, fidelity 1; 244

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith and Hope work together, even in salvation.

Just as Paul wrote, we are saved by faith, Paul also wrote we are saved by hope.

Ro 8:24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

Hope – **1680** ἐλπίς elpis {el-pece'}

Meaning: 1) expectation of evil, fear 2) expectation of good, hope 2a) joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation 3) on hope, in hope, having hope 3a) the author of hope, or he who is its foundation 3b) the thing hoped for

Usage: AV - hope 53, faith 1; 54

- When you operate in faith, you hold to a position until what you have faith in manifests.
- You don't second guess yourself.
- You don't waver.
- You don't speak words in opposition to what you are believing.
- You are not double-minded.
- You don't argue or dispute within yourself.
- You don't abandon your belief, or go back and forth in your confession.
- When you have faith, your thoughts, your heart, mind, your words, and your actions are in one accord, no matter how long it takes to manifest.

Doubt – 1252 διακρίνω diakrino {dee-ak-ree'-no}

Meaning: 1) to separate, make a distinction, discriminate, to prefer 2) to learn by discrimination, to try, decide 2a) to determine, give judgment, decide a dispute 3) to withdraw from one, desert 4) to separate one's self in a hostile spirit, to oppose, strive with dispute, contend 5) to be at variance with one's self, hesitate, doubt

Usage: AV - doubt 5, judge 3, discern 2, contend 2, waver 2, misc 5; 19

Enemies of Faith:

- Fear
- Doubt
- Unbelief
- Walking by Sight

Mt 21:22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

4100 πιστεύω pisteuo {pist-yoo'-o}

Meaning: 1) to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, place confidence in 1a) of the thing believed 1a1) to credit, have confidence 1b) in a moral or religious reference 1b1) used in the NT of the conviction and trust to which a man is impelled by a certain inner and higher prerogative and law of soul 1b2) to trust in Yeshua or God as able to aid either in obtaining or in doing something: saving faith

1bc) mere acknowledgment of some fact or event: intellectual faith 2) to entrust a thing to one, i.e. his fidelity 2a) to be intrusted with a thing

Usage: AV - believe 239, commit unto 4, commit to (one's) trust 1, be committed unto 1, be put in trust with 1, be commit to one's trust 1, believer 1; 248

Mt 21:23 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?

Authority – **1849** ἐξουσία exousia {ex-oo-see'-ah}

Meaning: 1) power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases 1a) leave or permission 2) physical and mental power 2a) the ability or strength with which one is endued, which he either possesses or exercises 3) the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege) 4) the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed) **Usage:** AV - power 69, authority 29, right 2, liberty 1, jurisdiction 1, strength 1; 103

Yeshua knew they were trying to force His submission to them. The High Priest and Sanhedrin were the only ones who could give Yeshua the authority to do what He was doing in the Temple Courts, and they were some of the ones questioning Him.

Mt 21:24 And Yeshua 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.

The question Yeshua asked them caused them to reason among themselves to come up with the answer to His question.

Mt 21:25 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?

Mt 21:26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

In their deliberation amongst themselves, they reasoned and acknowledged that John was a prophet. They reasoned and concluded that no matter what answer they gave, they would entrap themselves, so they chose not to answer. Although they recognized John was a prophet, they did not repent as a result of his teaching. And as we know, the prophet John was killed by Herod. Yeshua would later call the religious leaders out for their refusal to repent after hearing the teachings of the prophet John.

Mt 21:27 And they answered Yeshua, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Fear – **5399** φοβέω (φοβέομαι) phobeo {fob-eh'-o}

Meaning: 1) to put to flight by terrifying (to scare away) 1a) to put to flight, to flee 1b) to fear, be afraid 1b1) to be struck with fear, to be seized with alarm 1b1a) of those startled by strange sights or occurrences 1b1b) of those struck with amazement 1b2) to fear, be afraid of one 1b3) to fear (i.e. hesitate) to do something (for fear of harm) 1c) to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience

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Their answer gave Yeshua the way out to not answer them and not be disrespectful of them; even though He knew they were trying to force His submission to them. The High Priest was the only one who could give Yeshua that authority from their point of view.

Although Yeshua did not answer them specifically, He asked them another question after telling them a story upon which their answer caused them to expose and reveal their unrepentance because of their unbelief in what John was teaching.

Mt 21:28 But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard.

Mt 21:29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

Mt 21:30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

Mt 21:31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Yeshua saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

Mt 21:32 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.

Righteous – **1343 δικαιοσύνη** dikaiosune {dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay} **Meaning:** 1) in a broad sense: state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God 1a) the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain a state approved of God 1b) integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting **Usage:** AV - righteousness 92; 92

The way of righteousness that John came unto them was the way that was acceptable to YeHoVaH. The religious leader's failure to accept and believe John, according to Yeshua, was a rejection of the way of righteousness or the way that was acceptable unto YeHoVaH.

Remember what Yeshua said about John in Chapter 11.

Mt 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Mt 11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

Mt 11:14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come.

Mt 11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Mt 11:16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

Mt 11:17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

Mt 11:18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

Mt 11:19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.