

Reading Matthew in Lent

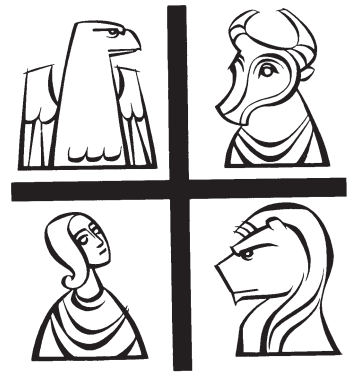
Gospel of Matthew 21: 1–32

The Triumphal Entry

- ¹ Now when they drew near to Jerusalem
and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives,
then Jesus sent two disciples,
² saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you,
and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her.
Untie them and bring them to me.
³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’
and he will send them at once.”
⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,
⁵ “Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”
⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.
⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks,
and he sat on them.
⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road,
and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.
⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting,
“Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!”
¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying,
“Who is this?”
¹¹ And the crowds said,
“This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

- ¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple,
and he overturned the tables of the money-changers
and the seats of those who sold pigeons.
¹³ He said to them,
“It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer,
but you make it a den of robbers.”
¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.
¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did,
and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”
they were indignant,



16 and they 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 infants and nursing babies
you have prepared praise?"
17 And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

18 In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry.
19 And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves.
And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!"
And the fig tree withered at once.
20 When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying,
"How did the fig tree wither at once?"
21 And Jesus answered them,
"Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt,
you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree,
but even if you say to this mountain,
Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.
22 And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive,
if you have faith."

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

23 And when he entered the temple,
the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching,
and said, "By what authority are you doing these things,
and who gave you this authority?"
24 Jesus answered them,
"I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer,
then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things.
25 The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?"
And they discussed it among themselves, saying,
"If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, Why then did you not believe him?"
26 But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd,
for they all hold that John was a prophet."
27 So they answered Jesus, "We do not know."
And he said to them,
"Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

28 “What do you think? A man had two sons.
And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’
29 And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went.
30 And he went to the other son and said the same.
And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go.
31 Which of the two did the will of his father?”
They said, “The first.”
Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you,
the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.
32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness,
and you did not believe him,
but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him.
And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

Prayer

O God,
you alone judge rightly
and search the depths of the heart.

Make us swift to do your will
and slow to judge our neighbour,
that we may walk with those
who follow the way of repentance and faith
and so enter your heavenly kingdom.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever..
Amen.