

**21** As he approached Jerusalem and came to Beit Pagei on the Mount of Olives, Yeshua sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>and told them, Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says anything to you, say that our master needs them, and he will send them right away.

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—commentary—

**21:1 came to Beit Pagei on the Mount of Olives** – Beit Pagei בית פאגי is mentioned many times in the Talmud (cf. *Sotah 45a*; *Sanhedrin 14b*). Since it is the outermost wall around Jerusalem and encloses a suburb, it is used often as an expression, referring to a place that, regardless of how close to the Sanctuary might be, is still outside its boundaries (cf. *Menakhot 95b*). The Mount of Olives, Har haZeitim, is like 4km east of Jerusalem, and it is the hill closest to the Sanctuary. Oral tradition considers this mount to be a place where the Shekhina – not being able to stay within the Temple itself due to people’s sin<sup>a</sup> – stays in wait for the sinners of Israel to repent, as it is written, “The glory of the Lord went from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city” (*Eze. 11:23*). And concerning the great day it says, “On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem from the east” (*Zechariah 14:4*). The Mishna refers to this place as the Mount of Anointing, Har haMishkha (*Mishna Parah 3:7*; *Middot 2:4*). A midrash says that during the years prior to the destruction of the Temple a heavenly voice in the Mount of Olives was calling for people to repent. This was precisely the message that both Yeshua and Yohanan the Immerser were proclaiming, but it was rejected by these Judeans. This is why, historically speaking, Yeshua chose the Mount of Olives as his praying place. Also, the narrator has made a symbolic contrast, by placing Yeshua at Beit Pagei and the chief priests at the Temple area. How ironic it is that the one outside the Temple carries with him the Shekhina, and the ones within the Temple are spiritually far from Hashem. Not only they did not repent, but also caused Yeshua’s execution. This is, in fact, the opening chapter for the final stretch of Yeshua’s life. Here we find his biggest opposition and also the event that sent him to his death.

**21:2 you will find a donkey tied there** – The donkey would be at the village in Beit Pagei. If taken at face value, it is plausible Yeshua knew the man to whom the donkey belongs, as he did pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year. However, the main point is the symbolic message the donkey carries with it, so another possibility is that he did not know the man but was giving a prophetic instruction, similar to what the Biblical prophets did (e.g., *1Kings 17:13*): “Go home and do as you have said, but first make a small loaf of bread for me... etc.” The two disciples finding the donkey has some similitudes with the story of Shaul and his servant finding his father’s she-donkey[s], who was in the aspect of Messiah ben Yosef, as it is written: “Take one of the servants and arise and go, seek the she-donkey... do not worry about the she-donkeys for they have been found” (*1Sam. 9:3, 20*). And again, “I will send a man from the land Binyamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel” (*1Sam. 9:15*). Notice that the Mount of Olives is also called “the Mount of Anointing” (*Mishna Middot 1:3*).

**21:3 Our master needs them** – In Aramaic: לִמְרָן מִתְבַּעֵן לְמָרָן, they have been requested, or they have been sought by our master.

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—relevant quotes—

“Rabbi Yonatan said: for three and a half years the Divine Presence stayed resting on the Mount of Olives, believing that perhaps Israel would repent, but they did not. A Bat-qol was proclaiming and saying (*Jer. 3:14*): Repent, children, return to me and I will return to you (*Mal. 3:7*). Since they did not repent, it said (*Hosea 5:15*), I will go and return to my place. Regarding that moment it says (*Jer. 13:16*), Give honor to the Lord your God before it grows dark.” (*Eikha Rabba, Petikhta 25*)

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<sup>a</sup> Haameq Davar on Bamidbar 35:34 says, “the Shekhina cannot dwell in a place of pollution.”

<sup>4</sup>This was done to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: <sup>5</sup>Say to daughter Zion, Behold, your king comes to you, humble and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, son of a she-donkey.

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commentary

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**21:4 This was done to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet** – It is a pesher interpretation (cf. *John 12:16*). It must be noticed that the author is not revealing a miraculous or coincidental situation. Rather, in this version of the story it was something intentionally orchestrated by Yeshua himself. In other words, he deliberately wanted to enter in Jerusalem riding on this donkey. The only supernatural part would be if Yeshua did not know beforehand the donkey's owner and gave the instructions by divine inspiration only. This is in contrast with the fourth gospel which says Yeshua simply found a young donkey and decided to mount on it (*John 12:14*). We cannot ignore there is a spiritual symbolism behind the donkey's location, for it was a donkey tied at the walls of the Sanctuary, in the village at Beit Pagei. Therefore, the author is not merely describing a random donkey, but he is identifying this proverbial donkey of redemption that the Oral Torah talks about. The first time we hear about this donkey is in the story of the aqaida: in a three-day journey towards the mount where the Temple would be built, Avraham uses this donkey to carry the tools for a sacrifice: wool, fire and knife. The three of them – Avraham, Yitzhaq and the donkey – were accompanied by "two young men" (*Genesis 22:3*). This is similar to Yeshua asking two of his disciples to find the donkey. Seven generations later, we find this same donkey with Moshe, who made his family mount on it right before returning to Egypt for Israel's redemption, as it is written: "And Moshe took his wife and his sons, and mounted them upon the donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt" (*Exod. 4:20*). It says "the donkey" and not "a donkey." Oral tradition understands from this detail that the donkey which Avraham used to carry tools, and the donkey which Moshe used to mount his family is the very same donkey upon whom Messiah is destined to appear, as it is written, "humble and riding on a donkey" (*Pirqei d'Rabbi Eliezer ch. 31*).

**24:5 your king comes to you, humble and riding on a donkey** – This is a shortened version of Zechariah. In its full it reads "Rejoice Bat-Tzion [daughter of Zion], shout, Bat-Yerushalaim. Behold, your king comes to you, a tzaddiq endowed with salvation. He is humble and riding on a donkey, and on a colt son of a she-donkey" (*Zech. 9:9*). The abbreviated form is exclusive of Mattai, as it does not appear neither in the LXX nor in the Hebrew Bible. He is purportedly quoting the parts he considers relevant. The "colt son of a she-donkey" part is, however, in harmony with the Masoretic text as opposed to the LXX which says "on a donkey and a young foal."

**24:5 and on a colt** – In Hebrew ayir עיר. The text in Zechariah can be interpreted in two different forms: The usual one is that the donkey and the colt are one and the same. It is called donkey, hamor חמור, because of Avraham and Moshe, and it is called colt, ayir, to point out to the fact that no king has ever ridden on it. This is the tradition registered in Mark, Luke and John. The three authors only mention one animal and not two (*Mark 11:2; Luke 19:30; John 12:14*). On the other hand, Mattai mentions separately the donkey and the colt because he reads the text in Zechariah quite literally, "a donkey, and a colt" (*Zech 9:9*). This is the author's take on the story and not what actually took place. Notice Yeshua does not ride on the two animals, but only on one of them. The author is taking the story midrashically, to send a message: two donkeys for the two Meshikhim. The king Messiah who rules over Israel is still to come in the future era, hence, nobody has ridden his donkey yet.

<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Yeshua had instructed them. <sup>7</sup>They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Yeshua rode on it.

<sup>8</sup>A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

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—commentary—

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**21:7 and placed their cloaks on them for Yeshua rode on it** – The Hebrew for donkey (חמור) has the same letters and the same numerical value as the word for matter or materiality (*homer* חומר). When the donkey is covered with cloaks, its image decreases so that the one who rides it increases. This alludes to the future messianic triumph of spirituality over materiality, as the commentators have taught: “No longer will the soul be impeded by the desires of the body, because body and soul will be fully integrated” (cf. *Derekh Hashem* 13:10, 13). i.e., the Messiah will be riding the donkey. He who has ears to hear let him hear. For cloaks on it is also written: “My heart is with the princes of Israel... riders of white donkeys sitting on saddle blankets” (*Judges* 5:10, cf. *Targum on Shoftim*).

**21:7 placed their cloaks on them for Yeshua rode on it** – In the literal sense it means Yeshua rode on the colt (see verse 5). However, the structure in the phrase is grammatically awkward. “On it” is singular (Hebrew, עליי, Greek, αὐτού). It seems like both the donkey and the colt are one and the same at the end of the sentence. This is an allusion to the future unification of Messiah ben Yosef and Messiah ben David.

**21:8 A very large crowd** – Even though Mattai and Luke interconnect the two events, the story of the donkey and the story of the crowd with palm branches are two independent traditions, as can be seen for the fact that in the fourth gospel both are compressed in four short verses, where the donkey incident happens after the crowd story, rather than prior to it (cf. *John* 12:12-15). In neither gospel the crowds interact with the donkey, only the disciples. Instead, the crowds place their cloaks on the road. Multitudes were travelling for the Jewish festival. Not all of them began praising Yeshua but a very large part of them, probably initiated by those who were accompanying Yeshua in his pilgrimage.

**21:8 spread their cloaks on the road** – As a token of reverence, as it is written: “And each took their cloaks and put them under him on the top step, and they sounded the shofar and said, Yehu has become king!” (*2Kings* 9:13).

**21:8 cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road** – palm branches, according to John (12:13). It is told in the story of the Hasmoneans that when Shimon the high priest got rid of a pagan enemy and became the first prince of the Hasmonean dynasty “the Jews made their entry with acclamations and carrying palm branches, to the sound of lyres, cymbals and harps, chanting hymns and canticles, since a great enemy had been crushed and thrown out of Israel” (*1Macc.* 13:51). From this it seems obvious the masses were seeing in Yeshua the triumphal entry of a son of David, probably coming to deliver them from Rome, just like the Hasmoneans delivered Israel from the Greeks. Proper leadership in Judea should come from a heir from the line of king David or from a high priest from the line of Zadoq (cf. *Zech.* 4:14). When Yeshua’s followers referred to him as the “son of David,” those in the crowd who joined them probably imagined him as a military leader; a “king of the Jews” who would give them freedom from Caesar and the “sons of darkness” (cf. *1QM* 1:1-2). A day of “salvation for the people of God... and everlasting destruction for all the company of Belial” (*1QM* 1:5).

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—relevant quotes—

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“Rabbi Alexandri said that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi raised a contradiction. It is written: “There came with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man” (*Daniel* 7:13–14). And it is written: “humble and riding upon a donkey” (*Zech.* 9:9). He explains: If Israel people merit redemption, he will come with the clouds of heaven. If they do not merit redemption, humble and riding upon a donkey.”

(*Sanhedrin* 98a)

<sup>9</sup>And the multitudes that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,  
Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the  
Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

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—commentary—

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**21:8 branches** – The chronology in the four gospels assumes the incident took place near the feast of Pesakh (i.e., Passover). However, this incident borrows so much imagery from the festival of Sukkot (the Tabernacles), as it is written: “Bring... myrtle leaves and date palm branches... to make booths” (*Nehemiah 8:15*). Olive branches were used to build the sukka, garments were used for ornament and the palm branches were used for the Lulav (cf. *Lev. 23:40; Sukka 32a*). Both festivals attract large crowds from all over the world into Jerusalem, and both have to do with redemption. About Sukkot it is written that “everyone... will go up... to Jerusalem to prostrate himself to the king... and to celebrate the festival of Sukkot” (*Zech. 14:13*). On the merits of observing Sukkot – which is called “the first day” (*Lev. 23:40*) God will bring that which is called “first” in Scripture: God’s presence, the Temple and Messiah (*Vayiqra Rabbah 30:16*). The author is pointing out to a triumphal entry similar to that of Shimon the Hasmonean in Maccabees, as explained above. It is possible, then, they performed a celebration “as in the days of Sukkot” even if it was Pesakh, as it is written: “And they kept eight days of gladness as in the days of Sukkot... therefore they took branches... and sang psalms to him” (*2Macc. 10:6-7*).

**21:9 Hosanna to the son of David** – Hosanna הושיענא or Hoshia נא, הושיע נא, literally means “save us,” so it can be translated as “save the son of David.” Hosanna also means supplication. During Sukkot the congregation recites Hoshanot or supplications. Led by the Temple priests, they would sing (*Psalms 118:25*) “Ana Hashem, Hoshia na,” please Hashem, bring us salvation (*Mishna Sukka 4:5*).<sup>b</sup> Hosanna is also the Aramaic name commonly given to the myrtle branch and more generically to the wreath or crown of the Lulav, which is formed by the four species of plants<sup>c</sup> carried in procession during the festival of Sukkot (cf. *Sukka 30b; 33b; 46b*). When the crowds say Hosanna to the son of David, they are implicitly saying “a lulav to the son of David” or more indirectly “a crown to the son of David,” which has messianic connotations. For the second day of Sukkot, the sages established the prayer “Send help for the Temple mount, the cornerstone, the house of your choice... send help for Tzion, the hill to which the world turns” (*Siddur Sefard, sukot*). This might be the underlying prayer which causes Yeshua to cleanse the Temple in the next paragraph.

**21:9 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord** – In Hebrew, ‘Barukh haba’ (Blessed is he who comes) is an idiom used to “welcome” someone into their houses or into their city. *Barukh haba lashevet* means “welcome to the tribe.” The phrase is a direct quote from the Psalms. It is written: “Open for me the gates of righteousness, I shall enter them and thank Hashem; this is the Lord’s gate” (*Psalms 118:19-20*). This is in reference to the pilgrimage from exile into the holy Temple (cf. *Rashi*). It then says, “Ana Hashem, Hosanna” (*Psalms 118:25*). And right afterwards “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (*ibid. 118:26*). This was said to those who completed the pilgrimage and to those who brought the first fruits (*Rashi; Ibn Ezra*). It can be taken to a midrashic level (cf. *Rabbi Alshich*). It is taught, “three are called by the name of the Blessed Holy One: the tzaddiqim, the Messiah and Jerusalem” (*Bava Brathra 75b*). About the tzaddiqim it says, “Everyone who is called by my name, and whom I created for my glory” (*Isaiah 43:7*). About Jerusalem, “the name of the city will be Hashem shma” (*Eze. 48:35*). About Messiah it says: “This is the name by which he shall be called, Hashem tzidqenu” (*Jer. 23:6*). “Barukh haba beshem Adonai” is therefore a chant to welcome

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<sup>b</sup> See third commentary on 21:9 below, on how this Psalm is also recited during Passover.

<sup>c</sup> The four species are the etrog [citron], lulav [palm branch], hadass [myrtle], and aravah [willow branches] as described in the Mishna (*Sukka 3:4*). See *Leviticus 3:40*.

<sup>10</sup>When Yeshua entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and were saying, Who is this? <sup>11</sup>And the multitudes answered, This is Yeshua, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. <sup>12</sup>And Yeshua entered the temple of God and drove out all who were buying and selling there, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.

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textual variants

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**21:12 Yeshua entered the Temple of God** – Some manuscripts “entered the Temple.” In John it says “in the Temple courts” (*John 2:14*).

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commentary

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the coming of the Messiah. He who comes “in the name of Hashem” is in order to make God known to the world (cf. *Eliezer Berkovits, Man and God, ch. 3, the Name of God, 223, 231*). “Anyone who wishes to rectify the imperfect state of this world is assured of a Heavenly assist. This is the meaning of the verse, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (*Shnei Lukhot haBrit, Torah shebikhtav, Toldot, Torah ohr 76*).

**21:9 Hosanna in the highest heaven!** – Among the things that the festivals of Sukkot and Passover have in common, one is the recitation of the Psalm 118, above mentioned, within the Hallel; a collection of praising songs that go from Psalm 113 to Psalm 118 (cf. *Sukka 38b*). In Passover the Hallel chant was sang during the Seder or during the priestly sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, so the Hosanna chants in this chapter are more in line with a Sukkot scenery. It seems to me that the authors of the synoptic gospels have merged the two festivals into one, for the crowds were having a Sukkot-like celebration for the coming of a son of David and not a celebration of sukkot per-se (cf. *2Macc. 10:6-7*). Also, all the gospels agree unanimously that Yeshua’s execution happened at some point during Passover.

**21:9 in the highest heaven** – This is directed towards the Creator, about whom we pray in the Hoshanot: “For your sake, our God... our creator... our redeemer... our attender, Hosanna” (*Siddur Ashkenaz, Sukkot*). Mattai’s version — “Hosanna in the highest heaven” — would be similar to what they do in the Targum; for the verse: “Holy, holy, holy is Adonai Tzevaot” (*Isaiah 6:3*) is interpreted to mean, “Holy is he in the highest heights of heaven” (*Targum Yonathan on Isa. 6:3*). Also, it is worth noticing that Mattai’s version is earlier than the hallakhic Hoshanot which we recite from the Siddur.

**21:12 Yeshua entered the Temple of God** – Mattai’s and Mark’s versions differ in the details. In the Markan version Yeshua looked around “but since it was already late, he returned to Bethany” (*Mark 11:11*). It was on the day following that Yeshua cursed the fig tree and cleansed the Temple.

**21:12 all who were buying and selling there** – There were some sceneries at the Temple which could have triggered Yeshua’s pious anger. In the days of the Temple everybody native and proselyte had the duty to contribute to the Temple with half a sheqel (*Mishne Torah Sheqalim 1:1-8*). The entire year there were thirteen boxes at the Temple to deposit the sheqels. If someone was to offer two doves or a burnt offering and did not have one, they would have to deposit there the money (*ibid. 2:2*). So far this was perfectly fine. But we are told that on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Adar, that is, three weeks before Pesakh, the money changers moved to sit in the Temple to enforce such payment (*Mishna Sheqalim 1:3*), and if someone is found in the Temple not having paid the fee, they will be forced by levy, overcharging them more than what they actually have to pay, taking from them even the garment they are wearing (*Mishne Torah Sheqalim 1:9*). It seems the Essenes refused to pay the half-sheqel annually because of this (cf. *4Q159 I 2:6-7*). Yeshua could have seen the priests extorting a poor person, or saw the buyers behaving as if such behavior was normal or Biblically permitted. There were bazaars at the Temple courts, where people could exchange money or buy animals for sacrifices. These were called “the shops of the sons of Hanan” (*Yerushalmi Peah 9b; Sifrei Devarim 105:19*) and it is here where the incident took place. Both in the half-sheqel extortion and in the bazaars the Sadducee priests of Beit Hanin – i.e., the house of Annas – were involved. It is written: “Woe to me due to Beit Hanin...”

<sup>13</sup>He said to them, It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers! <sup>14</sup>And there came the blind and the lame to him at the temple, and he healed them. <sup>15</sup>But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, Hosanna to the son of David, they were indignant.

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textual variants

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**21:13 the chief priests and the scribes** – In the Aramaic mms., “the chief priests and the Pharisees.” Here the word “Pharisees” or Perushin must be understood in the Talmudic sense that, “the plague of the Pharisees erodes the world” מכות פרושין הרי אלו מכלי עולם (*Mishna Sotah* 3:4). This refers to the plague done under the pretext of adherence to the Torah by hypocrite Pharisees who, claiming to promote piety and abstinence on the outside, inside are wicked and selfish and their well-intended impositions and regulations cause the common Israelites to stumble and fall (see also *Sotah* 22b).

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commentary

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their chief priests and their sons were Temple treasurers, and their sons-in-law were overseers, and their servants strike people with clubs” (*Pesakhim* 57a). As we have explained in Mattai 9, overcharging your brother, making him pay more than what he needs to in order to gain a profit, and making him pay through extortion is all considered robbery. It has been written: “You must not sacrifice... an ox or a sheep that has in it anything bad” (*Deut.* 17:1). The Targum Yonathan renders, “anything [even if] it was robbed or exhorted” (*Targ. Yonathan on Devarim* 17:1). A perversion of justice renders the sacrifices and the Temple service impure.

**21:13 My house will be called a house of prayer** – As it says, “I will bring them to my holy mount, and I will cause them to rejoice in my house of prayer, their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable upon my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer” (*Isaiah* 56:7).

**21:13 a den of robbers** – As it says, “Has this house upon which my name is called become a den of robbers in your eyes?... ..I will cast you away from my presence” (*Jer.* 7:11, 15). The fact that he calls them robbers proves he witnessed inappropriate business behavior within the Temple courts. There is massive evidence they were using extortions and accepting bribes, as Josephus teaches, the house of Hanan not only received bribes but also bribed others (cf. *Josephus, Antiq.* 20:9:4; 20:8:8). On one occasion Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel vigorously protested because the price of two doves had been raised to one gold denar, which was twenty-five times its price (*Mishna Keritot* 1:7), two doves were the offering of a poor-man, so the price was outrageous. The corruption in the priesthood is found in an apocryphal book called 2<sup>nd</sup> Barukh in which, lamenting over Jerusalem, Barukh says, “You priests take the keys of the Sanctuary and cast them to the highest heaven, and give them to the Lord saying, Guard your house yourself, because we are false stewards” (*2Barukh* 10:18). The Essenes also denounced the corruption of the non-Zadoqite priesthood, using expressions such as “the wicked priest” (*1QpHab.* 1:13; 8:9; 9:9) who robs the poor (*1QpHab.* 8:12; 12:10) and amasses wealth (*ibid.* 8:8-12). It is expected for the Messiah to “refrain from partaking of that which is taken by violence and robbery” (*Targum on Bereshit* 49:12). This is precisely what Yeshua is doing in this passage. The fourth gospel says that when the disciples remembered this incident, it came to them the verse (*Psalms* 69:10): “the zeal for your house consumes me” (*John* 2:17). Let us remember that it was the same corrupted house of Hanan the one that arrested Yeshua. Forty years prior to the destruction of the second Temple the Sanhedrin was exiled from the Sanctuary and sat in the Hanut (i.e., the shop of the sons of Hanan). This means they no longer judged cases of fines and/or capital law (*Avoda Zara* 8b). It was about this approximate time period when Yeshua cleansed the temple. The generation prior to the fall of the Temple “were perverse and twisted (cf. *Deut.* 32:5); though they were righteous and pious when it came to Torah study, they were not upright in their societal behavior” (*Haameq Davar, introduction to Bereshit*). As a Galilean Hassid, Yeshua saw the Temple (the center of the spiritual world) being run by a generation of Torah scholars who lacked any form of empathy towards the poor and the needy. That is what triggered his righteous anger. For these leaders being the Erev Rav see commentary on Matt. 3:7.

**21:14 and he healed them** – He was helping the needy, which is what the priests at the Temple should have done, instead of overcharging and extorting the poor in front of Rome and the other nations.

<sup>16</sup>Do you hear what these children are saying? they asked him. Yeshua replied, Yes, have you never read, Out of the lips of children and infants you have prepared your praise? <sup>17</sup>And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night. <sup>18</sup>Early in the morning, as Yeshua was on his way back to the city, he was hungry.

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commentary

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**21:16 Out of the lips of children and infants you have prepared your praise** – This from the Psalms: “Out of the lips of children and infants you have established strength because of your adversaries” (*Psalm 8:3 [2]*). The verse says “established strength” which in the original context refers to the Levites and the priests, who are metaphorically called “children and infants” (cf. *Rashi*). “Because of your adversaries,” that is, “to let them all [sinners] know that we are your people” (cf. *ibid.*). Now there is a contrast, because it is the chief priests, with their corruption at the Temple who have become God’s enemies by desecrating his Name in front of all the nations. And so this pesher turns “the children and the infants” into literal children on whom the Shekhina rests in Jerusalem. Similarly, the midrash interprets this verse to mean that when God was about to give the Torah to the Israelites, he demanded guarantors that people would continue to observe it. God finally accepted the nation’s children as their guarantors (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah*). In other words, if the parents sin, at least their children should honor Hashem. “As a result of this arrangement the attribute of justice is entitled to include such children in retribution when these forces are at work” (*Ohr haHayim on Tehilim 8:3*). The Talmud also makes use of Psalm 8 to teach that at the splitting of the sea, as soon as the children – even the babies at the womb – felt the Shekhina, they began praising and saying, “This is my God and I will glorify him” (*Sotah 30b*). This is how the words יסדת עד “you have established strength” turn midrashically into “you have prepared your praise.” This is found in Greek and in Aramaic translations (*Peshitta Psalm 8:3; Psalm 8:2 [3] LXX*). The children could also be a midrashic symbol for the penitents who did teshuva. The same Psalm says later about the son of man, “you will crown him with glory... all things you have placed under his feet” (*Psalm 8:6-7*), which gives a deeper context into Yeshua’s pesher.

**21:17 Bethany** – In Aramaic *Beit-Anya* בית עניא, is a town on a slope of the Mount of Olives, fairly close to Jerusalem. Yeshua had friends in this town, more specifically a family of three siblings: Martha, Mariam and Eleazar, a.k.a. Lazarus (cf. *Luke 10:38-39; John 11:5*). This is why the town is known in Arabic as Al-Eizariya; the place of Eleazar. It is commonly held among scholars that Bethany refers to the Hebrew Beit-Hini בית היני, meaning house of figs, also called Beit Hino (cf. *Bava Metzia 88a*). This would make sense considering the sub-story involving a fig tree. Shem Tov’s Mattai has בית חניא Beit-Haninia, house of mercy, or perhaps it is a corruption of Beit-Hanina, the house of someone called Hanina.

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relevant quotes

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“Some of the Perushin also in the crowd said to him, Rabbi, restrain your disciples. But he responded, Amen I tell you, if these folks were to keep quiet, those stones would shout.”

(*Luke 19:39-40*)

<sup>19</sup>Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, May you never bear fruit again! Immediately the tree withered.

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—commentary—

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**21:19 found nothing on it except leaves** – It was close to the feast of Pesakh (i.e., Passover), so it was not the season for figs (cf. *Mark 11:13*). Still, many fig trees put forth early unripe fruit. These small figs which appear in the season of Passover are called bikurah (*Isaiah 23:4*), which Israelites ate, as it is written, “regarding unripe figs, from the time they begin to glisten they may eat them” (*Mishna Sheviit 4:7*). Ripe, unripe or from the previous harvest, this tree did not have any figs, but only leaves, meaning, only an external appearance.

**21:19 May you never bear fruit again!** – The Talmud tells a story which at first seems to be the opposite of this one: “Rabbi Yosei had workers laboring on the field... and no bread was brought to them. They said to his son: We are hungry. Since they were resting under a fig tree, he said, Fig tree! Fig tree! Produce your fruit so that my father’s workers may eat. And it was so” (*Taanit 24a*). But while the Talmudic story relates a miracle that took place for the sake of those hungry workers, Yeshua’s curse on the fig tree has a more symbolic meaning, and if understood properly, it is a warning against those who did not actually help the hungry workers to get their food. In chapter 25 Yeshua would say: “For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat... They will answer, Master, when did we see you hungry or thirsty... and did not help you?... Amen I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me” (*Matt. 25:42-45*). Luke offers a parable which says “for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, not finding any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?” (*Luke 13:7*). This parallels the prophecy in Isaiah, which says “What more could I have done for my vineyard that I already did for it? Why, when I expected sweet grapes, did it produce sour fruit? Therefore, this is what I will do with my vineyard: I will take away its hedge and it will be consumed... I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated... For the vineyard of Hashem Tzevaot is the house of Israel and the men of Judah are the plants of his delight” (*Isaiah 5:4-7*). Similarly the prophet Micah wrote: “Woe is me!... There is not a cluster of grapes to eat or a first ripe fig, which my soul desires. The righteous has perished from the land, and there is no upright person among men” (*Micah 7:1-2*). Yeshua’s story of the cursed fig tree, therefore, is a condemnation to the injustice and corruption he saw taking place at the Temple, the heart of Israel. It is written, “The fig tree has ripened its figs” (*Song of songs 2:13*). This means “prior to the days of Messiah” (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah 2:33*). After years of visiting Jerusalem, Yeshua cursed a fig tree which symbolically represented his generation and more specifically its priesthood, who are supposed to be their leaders. They had in their midst the sacred Temple of God, but the Shekhina had abandoned them, and they were like a tree with no fruit. On what account were the people of the second Temple sent to exile? “Because they loved money and hated one another” (*Tosefta Menakhot 13:22*). “Jerusalem was destroyed because they ruled mercilessly, adhering strictly to the Torah, and not going beyond the letter [like the pious people do]” (*Bava Metzia 30b*). Yeshua came to see if the Messianic era could take place in his generation, [This is Yesod approaching Malkhut], but sadly found no fruits in the fig tree [Malkhut was separated from Yesod]. The lack of fruit represents a lack of good deeds, as the Immerser had said, “Produce fruit that accords with repentance” (*Mattai 3:8*).

**21:19 Immediately** – Others say “in the next morning” (*Mark 11:20*).

**21:19 the tree withered** – In the likeness of what is written: “Why does Jerusalem always turn away?... They refuse to repent. How can you say, We are wise and the Torah of Hashem is with us? ... I will utterly consume them, says Hashem. There will be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, even the leaves will be withered, for they transgressed what I gave them” (*Jer. 8:5, 8, 13*).



<sup>20</sup>When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. How did the fig tree wither so quickly? they asked. <sup>21</sup>Yeshua replied, Amen I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, Go, throw yourself into the sea, and it will be done.

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commentary

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**21:20 When the disciples saw this, they were amazed** – With this prophetic act Yeshua had imprinted in their disciples a bitter truth they would never forget, namely, that within their own generation they will witness the people in Judea being sent to exile. It was certainly for them the end of days, therefore, notice the later parable in Matt. 24:32, since figs are considered summer trees. Summer in Hebrew is qaitz יקץ, which sounds almost like the Hebrew for “end” or end times, qeitz יקץ (cf. *Dan. 12:4*).

**21:20 How did the fig tree wither so quick?** – Come and see: Rabbi Nehemiah taught that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a fig tree. The tree that taught them what they were doing wrong is the same tree that served their rehabilitation (*Berakhot 40a*), as it is written: “They sewed together fig leaves” (*Gen. 3:7*). And it is written: “He who guards the fig tree shall eat its fruit” (*Prov. 27:18*). This is a metaphor for the Torah. “Just like a man who searches for figs in a fig tree will always find at least one fruit, so it is too with matters of Torah. Whenever someone meditates upon them, he will always find meaning in them” (*Eiruvim 54a*). The Torah can be “a potion of death or a medicine of life” (cf. *Yoma 72b*). Mysticism teaches that it is by means of water that a tree brings forth branches and fruits. “The waters of the Holy One are wisdom, which are the souls of the righteous people... and because of the righteous of Israel the Shekhina rests among them and the... tree blooms” (*Bahir #124*). Because the leaders of Israel were corrupt and the Shekhina had departed from them – not even unripe fruits were found in their behavior – they attached themselves to the aspect in the tree of knowledge of good and evil that corresponds to death and judgment. As it is written: “As the days of a tree will the days of my people be” (*Isaiah 65:22*); the sudden withering of the fig tree was symbolic of the lack of Hassidim dwelling among them, that is: people with actual empathy towards others, and because of this, Yeshua decreed they were going to experience a sudden exile at the end of their generation, as the Hassidim taught “the tzaddiq has the two powers of the Torah: an elixir of life or a potion of death, and he who gets close to him can find in him the means to ‘cut down the plantings’<sup>d</sup> or enter and leave in peace” (*Liquetei Moharan 31:13*).

**21:21 if you have faith and do not doubt** – This is bitakhon, confidence. The mystical teachings explain, this is obtained by coupling the intellectual with the emotive, by making the heart and the mind to work as one. What you think, what you feel and what you say must be in perfect harmony. “If two make peace with each other in a single house, they will say to the mountain, Move from here! And it will move” (*Thomas #48*). Everything starts with educating and taming your thoughts, so that you have control over the doubts caused by your evil inclination, as we have been taught, “the thoughts in your mind are the conduit of life for the emotions in your heart” (*Igorot Qodesh, Tzemakh tzedeq, #16*). Someone who has absolute bitakhon in that the Creator sustains everything will not engage in shady businesses (cf. *Hayei Adam, Zikhru Torat Moshe p. 17*).

**21:21 you can say to this mountain, Go, throw yourself into the sea** – It says, “this mountain” and not “a mountain.” It means you can overcome your evil inclination. As the sages teach, in the future the Blessed Holy One will slaughter the evil inclination and to the righteous it will appear “as tall as a mountain,” so they will say “How were we able to conquer this mountain?” (*Sukka 52a*). The Markan version adds, “And when you stand up to pray, if you are holding anything against anyone, forgive them, so your Father in heaven may forgive your transgressions” (*Mark 11:25*). It is, therefore, still speaking indirectly against what he saw at the Temple.

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<sup>d</sup> “Cut down the plantings” is a Talmudic expression; it means they will understand his teachings to be heretical.

<sup>22</sup>If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. <sup>23</sup>Yeshua entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. They asked, By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority? <sup>24</sup>Yeshua replied, I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

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commentary

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**21:23 the chief priests and the elders of the people** – While Judean Pharisees learnt from one teacher alone and their speech was refined, the Galileans learnt from many different teachers and their speech was clumsier in comparison (cf. *Eiruvim 53a*).<sup>e</sup> Because of this many of the Haverim in Judea had developed some superiority complex and even certain intolerance towards the Galileans. It can be compared to New York citizens who discriminatorily stereotype Texan people as uneducated countrymen. This is the confrontation between the forces of Messiah ben Yosef and Messiah ben David in every generation, as it is written: “And Judah approached [Yosef; that is, in confrontation]” (*Gen. 44:18*). Although Judah has the promise of the kingdom, Yosef was asked: “Will your mother and I and your brothers actually prostrate before you?” (*Gen. 37:10*). Ironically, it was in Galilee, and not in Judea, from where the most profound levels of the Torah were revealed. Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai – the leader of mystical thought in Rabbinic Judaism – was from Galilee. Judea represents Malkhut (the kingdom) whereas Galilee represents Yesod (righteousness, redemption). And so the spiritual awakening of the world is supposed to come from Galilee and not from Judea (cf. *Zohar 2:7b*). Judea being Malkhut means that if the leaders in Judea are sinners, they cause the Yesodian energy to bounce back, which translates into them rejecting the tzaddiqim and not recognizing them, in the aspect of, “Yosef recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him” (cf. *Qol haTor 2:39*). Had the Judeans been righteous, they would have welcomed the Davidic Messiah, as it is written: “Rejoice daughter of Zion, your king comes” (*Zech. 9:9*; cf. *Sanh. 79a*). In this verse, “daughter” refers to Malkhut, and “Zion” or Tzion refers to the righteous of Israel – Yesod within Malkhut (cf. *Psalm 9:15*; *2Kings 19:21*). As it is written “Hashem will bless you out of Zion” (*Zohar 3:36a*).

**21:23 By what authority are you doing these things?** – In other words: “Who is your Rabbi? What is your school of thought? Or perhaps are you claiming to be a prophet who comes directly from God?” See the Talmudic parallel: “According to whom do we hang bunches of unripe dates on a palm tree?” (*Shabbat 67a*). In truth, what they wanted to know was if his behavior (i.e., driving out the money changers and healing the needy) was a decree from Heaven, or if perhaps some leadership among the Zealots or other sects was behind the tumult, or maybe he simply did it on his own initiative.

**21:24 I will also ask you a question** – There is this famous joke within Jewish communities: “A non-Jew asks: Why is it that every time I ask a Jew a question, they always answer with another question? The Jew replies, So, what is wrong with asking questions?”<sup>f</sup> Yeshua could not directly respond, because no matter what he answered they would find a way to turn his words against him.

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<sup>e</sup> Notice the apparent contrast in two teachings: Yehoshua ben Perakhia would say “Make for yourself a teacher” (*Avot 1:6*) whereas the kabbalist Shimon ben Zoma would say “who is wise? He who learns from everybody” (*Avot 4:1*).

<sup>f</sup> cf. Talmud, curriculum and the practical: Joseph Schwab and the Rabbis, p. 14; attributed to David Purpel.

<sup>25</sup>The immersion of Yohanan—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from man? They discussed it among themselves and said, If we say from heaven, he will ask, Then why did you not believe him? <sup>26</sup>But if we say of human origin, we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that Yohanan was a prophet. <sup>27</sup>So they answered, We do not know. Then he said, Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. <sup>28</sup>What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, My son, go and work today in the vineyard. <sup>29</sup>I will not, he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup>Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, I will, master, but he did not go.

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textual variants

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**21:28 a man who had two sons** – In some manuscripts the roles of the first and second son are reversed. In principle, the order in which they are mentioned does not affect the interpretation. However, some scholars might have preferred to have the order inversed so they could identify the sons with Israel (as a first son) and the gentiles (as a second son). It is wrong, though, for the nations are completely absent in the context of the entire chapter, so they are forcing a theology that does not belong to the narrative. These authors probably ignore the fact that according to Judaism the Torah was first offered to the nations and not to Israel, but they turned it down (*Avoda Zara 2b*).

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commentary

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**21:25 the Immersion of Yohanan** – The immersion for forgiveness of sins, since his mission was calling everybody to repentance, but these men rejected him, because they would stigmatize as heretic anybody who would not have their same beliefs or would not observe Torah in the exact same manner as they did, for their heart was filled with baseless hatred (cf. *Haameq Davar, introduction to Bereshit*). Yeshua was continuing Yohanan’s mission, so his question was pertinent.

**21:25 Was it from heaven or from man?** – Was Yohanan a prophet or did things on his own accord? The expression “from Heaven” is found in the Talmud, as it says, “the Torah is... from Heaven” (*Mishna Sanhedrin 10:1*), or “The [success] of this nation [Rome] comes from Heaven” (*Avoda Zara 18a*). “From man” here denotes the opposite of “from heaven,” as it is written, “I sent messengers... with words of peace” (*Deut. 2:26*), which Rashi comments: “Even though the Omnipresent did not command me to do so.”

**21:26 we are afraid of the people** – Yohanan the Immerser preached virtue, righteousness and piety, and people went in multitudes to meet him, “for they were greatly moved by hearing his words” and “Herod feared the influence this man had on the crowds” (*Josephus, Antiquities 18:5:2*). Yohanan had confronted the priests and called them “brood of vipers” (*Matt. 3:1*). Similar to Yeshua’s curse on the fig tree, the Immerser had said against them, “The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” (*Matt. 3:10*). The Immerser also said about Yeshua, “He will clear his threshing-floor” (*Matt. 3:12*), which is an allusion to the Temple.

**21:31 Which of the two did what his father wanted?** – The father is the Creator, the vineyard is the Torah. The son who first did not want to go represents the sinners of Israel, people rejected by the Haverim and the religious world because they lived without Torah. But they became Baalei Teshuva and accepted the yoke of Heaven. On the other hand, the chief priests who from childhood had claimed “We will do and hear” (*Exod. 20:15*) had corrupted themselves, hence breaking the most essential command of the Torah, which is to love your fellow as yourself (cf. *Bereshit Rabbah 24:7; Bava Qama 51a*).

<sup>31</sup>Which of the two did what his father wanted? They answered, The first. Yeshua said to them, Amen I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering before you into the kingdom of God. <sup>32</sup>For Yohanán came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

<sup>33</sup>Listen to another parable: There was a house-lord who planted a vineyard. He enclosed it with a hedge, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. <sup>34</sup>When the time for the fruits approached, he sent his servants to the cultivators to collect his fruit.

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commentary

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**21:31 entering before you into the kingdom of God** – This takes one of Yeshua’s teaching a step further: “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of Heaven” (*Matt. 5:20*). These men were rigorous in their legislation of the letter of the Torah, but did not go “above and beyond the letter of the Torah” which is the characteristic of a Hassid (cf. *Avot 5:10*). They therefore lacked the heart of the Torah, which is compassion and empathy towards others. As said above, the Temple was destroyed because its rulers only ruled on the letter of the Torah and did not go beyond the letter of the Torah (*Bava Metzia 30b*). “In the second Temple they were all occupied with Torah. Why then was it destroyed? Because they corrupted it with baseless hatred” (*Yoma 9b*).

**21:32 the way of righteousness** – It is written about Avraham “Walk before me and be perfect” (*Gen. 17:1*), which Nahmanides explains it to mean, “follow the way that I will show you” (*Ramban on Gen. 17:1*). It is probably from this expression that the Nazarenes were later known as “haDerekh” or “the way” (*Acts 9:2, 24:22*).

**21:32 but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did** – This tradition was recorded in Luke: “Even the tax collectors came to be immersed and said, Teacher, what should we do? And he responded, Collect no more than what you are permitted” (*Luke 3:12*). “And people were all... wondering in their hearts if Yohanán could be the Messiah” (*ibid. 3:15*).

**21:32 even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him** – Because the Immerser had taught them, “Do not take money by force” and “be content with your wages” (*Luke 3:14*), which was contrary to their behavior, which was the behavior of the Erev Rav. The word “repent” here is the same word the parable uses for the son who changed his mind. They as spiritual leaders of the nation were in a worse spiritual position than the first son, who, although certainly a sinner, as did not want to work on the vineyard, with all his flaws ultimately repented and went.

**21:33 enclosed it with a hedge** – He gave commands and boundaries so that people would not go astray.

**21:33 dug a winepress** – Established scribes to interpret the commands.

**21:33 built a watchtower** – Established elders to watch over the nation that ethical behavior is being observed.

<sup>35</sup>The cultivators seized his servants; they beat one, stoned another, and murdered a third. <sup>36</sup>Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. <sup>37</sup>Last of all, he sent his son to them. Perhaps they will respect my son, he said. <sup>38</sup>But when the cultivators saw the son, they said to each other, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take his inheritance. <sup>39</sup>So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. <sup>40</sup>Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? <sup>41</sup>They replied to him, He will severally destroy them, and the vineyard will be given to other cultivators, who will give him his fruits in their seasons.

<sup>42</sup>Yeshua said to them, Have you not read in the Scriptures: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

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commentary

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**21:35 they beat one** – The parable is speaking of the Erev Rav, the evil mixed multitude who became heads of Judah throughout the generations. The first servant who was beaten probably refers to Jeremiah (Yirmiyahu), who was severally beaten (*Jer. 37:15*) by the people of king Zedekiah of Judah, who “did evil in the eyes of Hashem” (*Jer. 52:2*). Although the Greek and Aramaic words for “beat” can be literally translated as beating, they can also imply a severe punishment in which death cannot be discarded. The Greek (ἐκδρέω) can mean to flay or to skin someone alive. The root used in the Aramaic manuscripts (כחי), usually means to wipe out or to dissolve (*cf. Eiruvim 13a*). The Targum uses a form of this verb (יתמיח) with the meaning of “flogging” to death (*Targum Esther 7:9*). It then could be that Yeshua refers to the prophet Uriyah, from Kriyat Yearim, who prophesized the destruction of Jerusalem. This caused the wrath of the king of Judah Yehoyaqim who persecuted him and struck him with a sword (beheaded him?) and cast his corpse into the graves of the common people (*Jer. 26:20-23*).

**21:35 stoned another** – The prophet Zechariah was lapidated under king Yoash of Judah, because he warned the kingdom of Judah that God had abandoned them. He was lapidated in the forecourt of the Temple (*2Chronicles 24:20-21*).

**21:35 and murdered a third** – Oral tradition says that the prophet Isaiah (aka. Yeshayahu) was sawn alive in two by the servants of Menashe (*Yevamot 49b*). Menashe was the fourteenth king of Judah, the first king after the dissolution of the northern kingdom, and the one who brought back polytheism in rebellion to his father Hezekiah (*2Kings 21:2-9*). These leaders of Judah are the leaders of the Erev Rav in their generations.

**21:39 threw him out of the vineyard and killed him** – That is a reference to Yeshua, who came as a heir of the throne of David calling for repentance and proclaiming the coming of the kingdom, but the leaders of the Erev Rav threw him out of the vineyard by giving him away to the gentiles, which is the sin of selling Yosef, as it is written “for they sold the innocent for money” (*Amos 2:6*). In the aspect of, “For they slaughtered a kid” (*Gen. 37:31*), and “a young he-goat for a sin offering” (*ibid. 7:22*).

**21:42 the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone** – This is from the same Psalm from which the crowds were earlier chanting Hosanna (*Psalm 118:22-23*). The people that the leaders rejected have become the cornerstone. In Kabbalah the stone that the builders rejected is the Shekhina within Malkhut (*Zohar 3:243b*). See how the Zohar identifies “the builders” with the scribes (*Tiqunei Zohar 145a*). As it is written, “Whereas [rituals and] sacrifices are relevant for this current world, righteousness and justice will remain

<sup>43</sup>Therefore I say to you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. <sup>44</sup>He who falls on this stone will be fractured; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed. <sup>45</sup>When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Yeshua' parables, they understood he was talking about them. <sup>46</sup>And they looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people regarded him as a prophet.

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—textual variants—

**21:44 He who falls on this stone will be fractured** – verse omitted in some manuscripts.

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—commentary—

the cornerstone in the world to come" (*Devarim Rabbah* 5:3). It is also an allusion to the two Messianic figures: Yosef, who was sold by his brothers (cf. *Qol haTor* 2:4) and king David, who was considered a mamzer by his own people (cf. *Shaarei Orah, Shaar 1, Tenth sefirah*).

**21:43 the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce** – As the Talmud teaches, even an idolater who [repents] and engages in the study of the Torah is in the level of a high priest (*Avoda Zara* 3a). Yeshua is not referring to giving the Torah to the gentiles, as many have mistakenly interpreted, for the Torah is "an inheritance to the congregation of Yaaqov" (*Deut. 33:4*; cf. *Makkot* 23b), or as Yeshua puts it: "Salvation is of the Jews" (*John* 4:22). In addition the religion of Rome has brought idolatry and bloodshed rather than fruits of the kingdom. The term is not in plural; it does not mean the nations or the gentiles. It is singular: "a people." When Yeshua says "the kingdom will be taken from you," he is not talking to the entirety of Israel, but to the corrupted leaders of Judah; the chief priest, the elders, the scribes, the perushin who were presiding at the Temple. Yeshua is thinking eschatologically. The kingdom would be taken from them and given to those with a humble heart, whose work hastens the coming of the Messianic era. The Erev Rav will disappear, as it has been taught: "A time will come when Amaleq will be forgotten" (*Rabenu Bahya on Devarim* 25:19). They are the congregation of saints forming the mystical body of the son of man, composed by Jews, lost tribes and gentiles, all those who live in perfect obedience to the Torah and its ethics for they will inherit the earth in the coming era. "Then shall the Lord of spirits hasten to expel [the wicked leaders] from his presence. ... The angels will take them to punishment, that vengeance may be inflicted on those who oppressed his sons and his elect. ... But the saints and the elect will be safe... And with the son of man they will dwell, eat, lie down and rise up for ever" (*Enoch* 61:14-17). "And he gave [the image that looked like a son of man] dominion and glory and a kingdom... his dominion is an eternal dominion which will not be removed" (*Daniel* 7:14). "The high holy ones will receive the kingdom and they will inherit the kingdom forever" (*ibid.* 7:18).