

THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #036
A Chronological Study

**"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
 uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."
 Psalm 78:2**



"The Landowner and The Murderous Tenants"
Matt 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19¹

INTRODUCTION
BACKGROUND

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY
Mark 11:9-10

***9 Those who went in front and those who followed
 were shouting:***

"Hosanna!
BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE
LORD;

10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!"

The Crowd was expecting that Jesus was the Messiah who would rescue them from the Romans and establish the Promised Kingdom of God there in Israel. What they didn't know was that yes, this was the Messiah, but He had come to sentence Israel for their disobedience and disbelief.

JESUS DRIVES THE MONEY CHANGERS FROM THE TEMPLE

17 And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."

18 The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.

The Son of God comes to earth and now returns to Jerusalem to come to the Cross for all mankind – and He finds the Jewish leadership has turned His father's temple into "a den of thieves."

19 WHEN EVENING CAME, THEY WOULD GO OUT OF THE CITY.

No peace, no relaxation – nowhere in the city of Jerusalem can they find escape from the persecution of the leadership and the needs of the populace, "feed me, heal me."

THE FIG TREE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER MATTHEW 21:18

18 Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry.

The creator of the universe come face to face with a fig tree that did not furnish a breakfast fig for Him and He uses it as a metaphor for the nation of Israel unwilling to produce a believing population for

their Savior and God – for generations. These leaders appear to be holy and Godly, but they are anything but and have absolutely failed in their positions and responsibilities to their people.

JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED MATTHEW 21:23

23 When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"

Jesus deals with them rather quickly by asking them an authority question that they refuse to answer – and He tells them He would not answer their question either.

PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS MATTHEW 21:31

This parable is full of the buildup of anger that Jesus has for the religious leadership of Israel – the rabbinical re-writing of the scriptures (The Talmud) in order to place burdens upon the people and to free the leadership from many of the moral burdens of the Law of God.

Jesus introduces them to a man who has two sons. Jesus asked these leaders, a question concerning the sons that quickly settled the issue.

Son #1, asked by his father to: Do my will... He says No, but then does. These are those who see the will of God, say no to it early in their lives, and then later say, "Yes," as did many of the prostitutes and tax collectors had done meeting Jesus.

Then Son #2, asked by his father to: Do my will...he says Yes, but then doesn't. These are those who see the will of God and say Yes to it... and then turn away from Him and no longer seek His will – as almost all of the religious leadership of the nation had done meeting Jesus.

Then Jesus turned and asked the religious leadership the magic

question:

31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They *said, "The first."

Jesus *said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.

Now, just before we move on to our parable, "**Jesus's Parable of the Vineyard,**" let us read through Isaiah 5:1-7, "**Isaiah's Parable of the Vineyard.**" We'll not comment on it – but you should know Jesus' parable's background.

Isaiah 5:1-7 **The Parable of the Vineyard**

Let me sing now for my well-beloved (Isaiah sings now for his well-beloved God)

*A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard.
My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.
He dug it all around, removed its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
And He built a tower in the middle of it
And also hewed out a wine vat in it;
Then He expected it to produce good grapes,
But it produced only worthless ones.*

(Now God Speaks...)

*"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,
Judge between Me and My vineyard.*

"What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?"

"So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard:

I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground.

"I will lay it waste; It will not be pruned or hoed, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it."

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel. And the men of Judah His delightful plant.

Thus, He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; [He looked] For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

THE PARABLE OF: THE VINEYARD OWNER AND THE MURDEROUS TENANTS

We find that there are **6 main characters** involved in this parable and we'll identify who each represents.

First there is "the Landowner" and we'll identify him as God.

Second is "the Vineyard" and we'll identify it as the nation of Israel.

Third will be "The Tenants" who rent and operate the vineyard while the owner is absent, and we'll identify them as all the unbelieving wicked leadership and people of the nation of Israel.

Fourth is the Owner's servants" who are working for the Owner, and we'll identify them as God's Prophets and spokesmen (including a donkey).

Fifth is the "Owner's Son" who is Jesus the Son of God. And

Sixth, is the "Future tenants" who are the future believers (Jew and Gentile) who will become members of "The Church, The Body of Christ."

THE LINEAR TEXT

Over the time these lessons on Jesus' Parables have been in

development, I've come to use a technique called "The Linear Text." This method uses the joining together of the various gospel texts that retell each of these parables. Then I take the most informative verses from each and put together a text – in the original story-order that rejoins all of the informative verses back into the full parable.

And **[Mt 21:33]** Jesus Said,
"Listen to another parable...

There was a landowner [God] who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers [The nation of Israel] and went on a journey [Lk 20:9c-11] for a long time.

So our story begins with God and the creation of man – the vineyard He built around them. He then placed protection around them (the wall). He then introduced the means to produce. Means to enable them to multiply that produce (the Wine Press). And lastly God placed His attention specifically upon all His creation (the Tower).

God placed man into His environment and then for the purposes of the parable the story moves on to... after calling Abraham to Himself (and then Isaac, Jacob, etc.) and making them become a nation named after Jacob who had been renamed **Israel (the Vine-Growers)**. The verse indicates that they were given the responsibilities of becoming God's tenders of the Vineyard (the world of introducing mankind to the "Owner" and bringing much fruit from them).

Over time, those vine-growers cultivated their vineyard for fruit that was for their own benefit and not the Owner's.

And then...

10 At the harvest time he sent a servant (Prophet) to the vine-growers, so that they would give him some of the

produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

Remembering that this is a parable (an illustration of Jesus' point), the "Harvest Time" in this story takes place over a large period of Old Testament prophetic time – from the first prophets all the way up to John the Baptist. As you study your scriptures you will find that many of God's prophets were persecuted, not-believed, beaten, and often killed – so this first beating in this verse just indicates the beginning years of God's sent prophets and the way they were received by the nation of Israel.

11 And he proceeded to send another servant (Prophet); and they beat [Mk 12:3b] wounded him in the head, also and treated him shamefully [Lk 20:11c-12] and sent him away empty-handed.

Because of his head wound, I like to think of this God sent prophet as John the Baptist. It, of course, may be just a reference to how many of God's sent ones were treated. This one, among the many, indicates that upon their death (return empty-handed), Israel's godless direction produced no product.

12 And he proceeded to send a third; [Mt 21:36] Again he sent another group of servants (Prophets) larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them, [Mk 12:5b] and one that they killed and then killed many others.

And so we can see how disappointed God (the Owner) would be by the end of sending His Prophets and getting no return. Of course, in reality, many were true followers of God and His Covenant – but again, the parable tells a pointed story about the corrupt religious leadership – and their followers.

We've mentioned it many times in these Parable Studies, but it bears mentioning again here. Once the nation had settled into Canaan (the promised land – that never really came into its fullness) the teachers of God's Word slowly began re-writing it in order to place rules of works, fake "holy" laws that placed

tremendous burdens on Israel's people and released the religious leadership from their moral and ethical laws that Moses had put in place. Over time... this became an extremely corrupt way of "keeping God's Covenanted Word." The servants that were sent represent the prophets that God had sent to His people, Israel, and then were rejected and killed by the very people who were **claiming** to be of God and being obedient to Him - but they were not.

So, how could His audience of religious leaders claim their obedience to God – as God's people – and still reject John and Jesus as His messengers?

13 The owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; saying, 'They will respect my son.'

Again, the story of the parable tells a made-up story to make a point – The Owner, **God**, did not worry and sit on His hands and ask out loud, "What shall I do?" God's program and purposes are eternal. His program for Israel was started before there was an earth, and will not end throughout eternity.

The two main statements in this verse are: "I will send my beloved son" and for the story, "They will respect my son," which is what they should have done – but they did not.

[Mt 21:38] But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'

God sends His Son and He arrives as a baby, spends 30 years learning people and Israel's ways – apart from God's requirements (His Word). At 30 He reaches the required age to become a man old enough to lead in a synagogue and He begins His public teaching ministry.

The religious leadership and their following fully expect that if they do away with Jesus that they will be able to eventually overcome the Romans and have their country and nation to themselves – to

rule. They fully expect that Jesus will make it impossible for that to happen – that He will trigger an uprising against the Romans and the nation and people will be removed from “their land.” He must be killed!

[Mt 21:39] They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

And that’s exactly what they did – They threw Him out of Jerusalem and killed Him.

And now, Jesus asks the question in front of those religious leaders (senior priests, Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees) in order to make them both aware and angry that He knows what they are doing, and what they are going to do.

40 Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?” (Those unrighteous persons whom God “rented” His precious vineyard)

These “tenants” would think that the fight for the property was over, but it wasn’t over. The owner would now appear on the scene.

Therefore... Now that Jesus is back in Heaven with His Father and the Holy Spirit... He is back in absolute unity with God the 3-in-one, so He will return as “The Owner of the Vineyard!” Jesus is asking them... “What will God do to those unrighteous leaders and their followers for killing GOD’s SON?”

41 They *said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons."

We don't want to miss that this answer came from the unrighteous religious leadership in confrontation with Jesus. Their answer was to get rid of the bad vine-growers and RE-RENT the vineyard - perhaps to themselves! (more about that in a moment).

Back in Matthew 21:23 we saw to whom Jesus was addressing: "the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching (disciples and listening followers).

The paying of the proceeds refers to the product that His believers produce in distribution of the Gospel and all those who become His through their belief in His calling.

42 Jesus *said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures,

Psalm 118:22-23

**'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,
THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone;
THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD,
AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?**

[Lk 20: 15b] When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!"

Can you imagine? They listened to His parable, knew Isaiah 5:1-7 and Psalm 118:22-23, and they looked at Him and said, "**May it never be!**"

43 Therefore I [Jesus] say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and GIVEN to a people, producing the fruit of it.

You will notice that this is not an “if this then that” statement. Not this nation, not this people, but “The Kingdom of God will be taken away from you!” How alarming is this statement to a believer, I can’t imagine allowing myself into such a position and then being told this. “The Kingdom of God will be taken away from you!”

We know this was prophesied against these unrighteous religious rulers and all those who followed them. The Kingdom of God would then be given to those who would believe The Son of God for their salvation and entrance into that Kingdom – Please notice that this Kingdom will be GIVEN to believers, not RENTED. The end result of this gift is the production of the fruit of this Kingdom. The multiplication of each vine plant as it produces more vine plants.

44 And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

As we know this one “stumbling stone,” Jesus, became the “Corner Stone of the Temple.” He is the One which the Kingdom Temple is built upon – the Spiritual Temple, not the stone one. Anyone who attempts to cast their wrath upon Him will be broken into pieces – and anyone who His wrath comes down upon will be crushed and scattered like dust.

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking [Mk 12:12] against them. [Mt 20:46] When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.

These chief priests and Pharisees who had conspired to Kill Him were too afraid to take any action at that time because of the coming holiday, they feared the possible reaction of the people because they considered Jesus to be one of God’s Prophets – but they knew who He was – the prophesized Messiah, the Anointed One, The Christ – and still they would kill Him in a little over a week – and all of this parable would then become true.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

1a. According to Isaiah, how did God take care of the nation of Israel?

1b. According to Isaiah, what was Israel's response to God?

1c. What was God's question to the religious leadership of Isaiah's time 770 years before the Gospel stories.

2a. Mt 21:40 "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?"

2b. And what did Jesus tell them?

3. How does this parable apply to you?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1a. According to Isaiah, how did God take care of the nation of Israel?

Let me sing now for my well-beloved
A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard.
My well-beloved had a vineyard **on a fertile hill.**
He dug it all around, removed its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
And He built a tower in the middle of it
And also hewed out a wine vat in it;
Then **He expected it** to produce good grapes,

1b. According to Isaiah, what was Israel's response to God?
But, it produced only **worthless** ones.

1c. What was God's question to the religious leadership of Isaiah's time 770 years before the Gospel stories.

"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,
Judge between Me and My vineyard."

And God did judge them: First the Northern Tribe of Israel was sent into captivity by Assyria 700 years before the Gospel stories and then He sent Judah, the last semi-righteous nation, and the Assyrians, into captivity by the Babylonians 610 years before our parable in the Gospels.

And these punishments did not change their unrighteous rebellion against the **God who had done everything to cure them of their evil and unrighteous desires to become their own gods.**

2a. 40 Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?"

41 They (the unrighteous leadership) *said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons."

2b. And what did Jesus tell them?

43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.

And that, of course, brought about the dismemberment of the Nation of Israel as His people of His Word... until God's plan of the Gospel is complete and is the beginning of the story of the Gospel being placed into the hands of believing people of the world.

3. How does this parable apply to you?

The primary application comes in the question, "Do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord, King, God, and Savior?"

Are you a Bonafede lover of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and do you live the life that the Word of God calls you to live. You cannot do that perfectly, no one just human can – and He knows that, just continue to trust and rely on Him, His mercy and grace... every day, or:

As you look at your life could it be possible that you once claimed that relationship with Him... but like the Jewish unrighteous leadership and their followers... did you choose to identify with Him by name but have rejected Him and the way of life He has designed for you, or:

Are one who just doesn't know Jesus but are interested in what He and The Word of God may have to offer for you? If that describes you... find the nearest local believing church and visit. Talk to others there, speak with the pastor, make sure that it is Jesus they are offering, and go from there. Find Him whatever the cost and then live in the love and grace of God – His promises are for Eternity, not just for today.

The "The Ancient Path" Study materials on this website are made available here free and may be copied for use in Bible study groups, in limited numbers, providing that no charge is made for them. Items that appear as copyrighted materials that are not of our authorship are not to be copied without the express permission of the original copyright holders. Every effort has been made to give proper footnote credit for items that are quoted.

J. Deering [AncientPath.net] is the author and editor of this study.

AncientPath.net © 2024
Jeremiah 18:15
"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"
2023-01-19 updated

**¹ All Scriptures from the New American Standard Bible
(1995)**