



CAPITOL COMMISSION

When Leaders Predict their Own Judgment!

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Matthew 21:33-46 *“Hear another parable, there was a certain man, a master of a house, who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it out to vinedressers and departed on a long journey. And when the season for the fruit drew near, he sent his slaves to the vinedressers to receive his fruit. The vinedressers took his slaves and beat one, killed another and stoned another. Again, he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they did the same to them. But finally he sent them his son saying, ‘They will reverence my son.’ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and possess his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” “And they say to Him, ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched destruction, and he will lease out the vineyard to other vinedressers who will give him the fruit in their seasons.” “Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures, “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone? This is the Lord’s doing and is marvelous in our eyes”? Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and will be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And the one falling on this stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it falls, it will crush him to powder.” “And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they knew that he was speaking concerning them. And although they were seeking to arrest Him, they feared the crowds, since they held him to be a prophet.”*

JESUS DESIRED TO SHOW THEM THE DEPTH OF GOD’S PATIENCE WITH THEM, THE GREAT WICKEDNESS OF THEIR HEARTS AND ACTIONS, HIS PREDICTION TO HIS PERSECUTORS THAT THEY WOULD KILL HIM, THEIR OWN FUTURE JUDGMENT BY THEIR OWN MOUTH, THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN TURNING FROM THEM AS A NATION, AND THEIR COMPLETE DESTRUCTION IN THE FUTURE.

How did Jesus show the leaders that their authority was subservient to His? How does Jesus’ parable reveal the entire history of Israel? Does this parable provide a window into the absolute love of God? How graciously does God delegate his rule among the nations? Have the leaders gone too far so that this judgment is irreversible? What insight does this give into the potential corrupting influence of leadership?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- APRIL 28-30: MATTHEW 22:1-14 *RESPONDING TO A ROYAL INVITATION*
- MAY 5-7: MATTHEW 22:15-22 *RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD AND GOVERNMENT*
- MAY 12-14: MATTHEW 22:23-33 *LIBERAL LEADERS QUESTION THE RESURRECTION*

Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem was on Sunday. Then the cursing of the fig tree and cleansing the temple was on Monday. Jesus had taught His disciples to believe in Him through mountain moving prayer, as they passed by the withered fig tree on this Tuesday morning of the Passion Week. He is in the temple early and a crowd has already gathered to hear His teaching. Since the crowd is with Christ, they fear to arrest Him. But the leaders reveal their fury at His removal of their lucrative “Bazaar of Annas,” when Jesus had cleansed the temple. They demand that He answer to their authority by questioning His authority. But Jesus proved them to be hypocrites, showing that tax collectors and harlots would enter heaven before them.

“HE THEN THREATENED THEM FURTHER WITH ANOTHER PARABLE, THE SECOND IN A TRILOGY OF JUDGMENT PARABLES, WHICH EVEN MORE GRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATED THEIR WILLFUL REJECTION OF GOD.” JOHN MACARTHUR

I. THE REALITY IS PICTURED MT. 21:33-40

Jesus describes a wealthy “*master of the house*” who makes an agricultural investment. He buys the land,

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 6:30AM –INTERCESSORY PRAYER – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY @ 12:00NOON –BIBLE STUDY – WYTESTONE PLAZA AT 8TH & MAIN 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

When Leaders Predict their Own Judgment!

plants a vineyard, builds its wall, digs a winepress, builds a tower, and leases it out to tenant farmers specializing in raising vineyards. The vineyard could not have received any better care. It takes four years for a vine to begin to bear fruit so there is also a significant time investment. Finally, his servants are sent to receive some fruit in return for his investment. The actions of the vinedressers reflect an astounding level of ingratitude and violence. They “beat” one; this word first meant “to flay,” then “to beat, thrash, or smite.” The usual meaning is that of ‘thrashing or cudgeling,’ and when used of a blow it indicates one of great violence.”¹ Then they “killed another and stoned another.” They do the same to all the other servants, proving a violent unwillingness to render the appropriate fruit. But the owner has a final solution, his son. He had “one son, his well-beloved” (Mark 12:6). “They will reverence my son,” he says as he gives them one last chance to repent. But those who have been graciously delegated authority over his land are not satisfied just to keep the fruit, now they want the land. So they plot to kill the son in premeditated murder in order to acquire his inheritance. “They took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.” Jesus then asks, “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

“APART FROM GOD’S GRACE, WE ALL RESENT THE LORD’S AUTHORITY AND WE ALL REBEL. WE DON’T MIND IF GOD GIVES US ADVICE, BUT WE WANT THE LAST WORD. WE WANT TO CONTROL THE VINEYARD.”
DANIEL DORIANI

II. THE RESPONSE IS PRECISE MT. 21:41

“Their reply was probably made complete, and full of details, that they might hide their own shame by a parade of justice in a case which they would have men

think was no concern of theirs.”² Their words precisely predict their own judgment and that of their nation. “They say to Him, He will bring those wretches to a wretched destruction, and he will lease out the vineyard to other vinedressers who will give him the fruit in their seasons.” They remember from Scripture that perfect justice is to repay to someone, exactly what they have done to someone else (Proverbs 26:27). The same root for the word “wretches” is used as an adverb to speak of their “wretched destruction.” And, to add intensity, the word they use for “destruction” represents complete and utter “destruction.” But even as the word was spoken the sharper ones gasped, “God forbid” (Luke 20:16).

“WHAT ARE WE DOING OURSELVES WITH OUR PRIVILEGES? TRULY THIS IS A SERIOUS QUESTION, AND ONE THAT OUGHT TO MAKE US THINK. IT MAY WELL BE FEARED, THAT WE ARE NOT, AS A NATION, LIVING UP TO OUR LIGHT, OR WALKING WORTHY OF OUR MANY MERCIES.” J. C. RYLE

III. THE REVELATION IS PROVEN MT. 21:27B-32

Jesus then asks, “Have you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone? This is the Lord’s doing and is marvelous in our eyes’” (Psalm 118:22-23). These verses were as memorized as those of the Triumphal Entry, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Psalm 118:25-26). In respect to their own words of judgment, Jesus continued, “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and will be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And the one falling on this stone will be broken in pieces, but on whomever it falls, it will crush him to powder.” Their judgment and removal is sure if they do not repent. “And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they knew that He was speaking to them.” They still seek to kill Him, but are afraid, because the crowds believe He is a prophet.

¹ W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, & William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 53-4.

² C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon’s Popular Exposition of Matthew*, (London: 1893; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), 186.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Have you ever come face to face with your own rebellion against God?
- 2) If God judges you by the justice that you have presented to others, where will you stand in the judgment?
- 3) Is Jesus Christ the Cornerstone of your faith and practice or is He a “stumbling stone” and “a rock of offense” to you?