

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

RLJ-1955

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### PART 56: WARNING TO THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

#### TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

The teachings of Jesus found in chapters 21 to 25 from the Gospel of Matthew took place on the day before the Passover. **Matthews 26:1-4**

After the confrontation with the fig tree, Jesus and the disciples entered the temple ground in Jerusalem. He was immediately met by the priests and the elders who questioned His authority to evict the merchants from the temple ground. **Matthew 21:23**

Jesus responded by questioning whether the baptism of John the Baptist was from God or from man. This posed a problem for the Jewish leadership since they had rejected John the Baptist. They reasoned among themselves and deduced that Jesus had countered their question with a clever trap of His own.

1. If they confirmed John's baptism was of God, Jesus would question why they refused to believe he was God's messenger.
2. If they stated John's baptism was of men, the common people would immediately turn on them since the public esteemed him as a man of God. **verses 25-26**

After discussion, the priests and the elders feigned ignorance. The God-man based His response upon theirs, and when they failed to provide an answer, He likewise chose not to offer an answer. **verse 27**

#### THE TWO SONS

Jesus told a story about a vineyard owner with two sons.

1. The first son was asked to work in the vineyard, and while he initially refused, he later relented went to work.
2. The second son was likewise asked to work in the vineyard, and while he affirmed that he would, he never did.

Jesus asked the religious leadership which of the sons did the will of the father? They correctly answered the first son. Although he originally refused, he nevertheless worked in the vineyard.

The God-man then castigated the Jewish leadership by stating that prostitutes and tax collectors would enter heaven before them because the ilk of society had responded to John the Baptist's message of repentance, whereas the leadership scoffed at John and refused to repent. **verses 28-32**

#### RENEGADE MANAGEMENT TEAM

In the next parable the following stage is set:

- ❖ The vineyard is Israel.



- ❖ God the Father is the householder.
- ❖ The Jewish leadership are husbandmen.
- ❖ The prophets of God are the servants.
- ❖ Jesus is the son.

The householder decided to build a vineyard and invested sufficiently to ensure it was a first-class operation. When the vineyard was completed, the owner appointed husbandmen to oversee it and left for a foreign country. **verse 33**

Once the vineyard began to produce fruit, the owner sent servants to collect what was due to him, but they were all mistreated. One was beaten, another killed, and the last was stoned to death. **verses 34-35**

When the owner discovered what took place, he sent a larger group of servants, but they astonishingly received the same treatment as the first group. **verse 36**

As a final attempt, the owner sent his son, hoping the wicked husbandmen would respect him. **verse 37**

However, when they saw the son coming, they decided to murder him in order to usurp ownership of the vineyard. **verses 38-39**

Jesus asked a rhetorical question of what the owner of the vineyard would do with husbandmen when he returned from the foreign country. **verse 40**

The religious leadership correctly responded that the owner would kill the pernicious husbandmen and replace them with new workers who showed sufficient respect. **verse 41**

## **THE CORNERSTONE**

Following the story, Jesus switched gears by launching into the illustration of a cornerstone. **verse 42**

- ❖ The stone is Jesus.
- ❖ The builders are the Jewish leadership.
- ❖ The word “rejected” refers to a stone that is tossed aside because it doesn’t appear to fit.
- ❖ The cornerstone is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. All other stones will be set in reference to this particular stone and it will determine the position of the entire structure.

The God-man referred to two specific Old Testament prophecies:

1. King David referenced a foundation stone. **Psalms 118:22**
2. The prophet Isaiah also referenced a foundation/corner stone. **Isaiah 28:16**

Jesus unflinchingly told the Jewish leadership that the Kingdom of God would be torn from them and given to another nation that was willing to bring forth fruit to the glory of God. **Matthew 21:43**

Jesus closed the parable with a two-fold warning to the Jewish leadership:

1. Having already described Himself as the cornerstone, the God-man again referenced Isaiah's prophecy that He would become a "stone of stumbling" and a "rock of offence" to the Israelites; they would stumble, fall, and be broken as a result of their unbelief and failure to repent. **verse 44a; Isaiah 8:14-15**

The obvious consequence of kicking a large, heavy, foundational stone is that you will break the bones in your foot, or at the very least, painfully bruise it. The dense rock is not hurt in the process. What was the injury for the unrepentant Israelites? They would die in their sins.

2. Jesus was referencing the punishment of stoning whereby a criminal standing on a scaffold twice his height was violently struck by a witness, causing him to fall off. It was not uncommon for the blow and subsequent impact below on a hard surface to kill the offender. If the guilty still lived, a heavy stone, sometimes requiring two men, was dropped on the upper torso to guarantee death. **verse 44b**

Imagine placing a dinner plate on the ground and striking it with a sledgehammer. The section of plate directly under the blow would shatter and turn to dust. This is the deadly effect the God-man would have on the unrepentant men and women who perish in the Lake of Fire.

When the chief priest and the Pharisees heard this parable, they understood that Jesus was speaking about them and wanted to arrest him, but they feared the people that had gathered to hear Jesus speak. **Matthew 21:45-46**

The apostle Paul would go on to describe the false righteousness of the Jewish leadership and how they tripped over Jesus. **Romans 9:30-33**

## **SUMMARY**

What is commonly known as the first covenant was in fact a contract between God and the twelve tribes of Israel. **Exodus 24:3-8**

The first covenant was replaced by the second covenant, which came into power on the day Jesus rose from the dead. **Hebrews 10:16-22**

The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army in A.D. 70 and the Israelites suffered another defeat in A.D. 135 when Simon bar Kokhba and the remaining Jews were removed from the Promised Land.

The political State of Israel was established in 1948, some 1,813 years later, when the Jews brought themselves back through deception and murder to seize part of the land in Judea and Galilee. This was not the work of God for He would have to go back on His own words to do so and renounce His integrity and character in the process.

***Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!***

***Do you have an ear to hear with?***