

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

J. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Parable Of The Judgment Of Israel's Leaders (Matthew 21:33-46)

I. Introduction

- A. When Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah (Matthew 21:1-22) and He was not accepted by Israel's leaders (Matthew 21:23-27), He gave a parable in Matthew 21:28-32 exposing their unbelief as inexcusable rebellion.
- B. He then followed that first parable with a second one in Matthew 21:33-46 on God's judgment on these leaders in Israel for their sin, and we view that second parable for applicable insight for our era (as follows):

II. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Parable Of The Judgment Of Israel's Leaders, Matthew 21:33-46.

- A. Following His parable on the religious leaders' inexcusable sin of rebellion in not accepting Him as Messiah, Jesus told them, "Hear another parable," and began to relate a second parable, Matthew 21:33a.
- B. He told of husbandmen a landowner hired to work a vineyard he had established while he left for a distant land, Matthew 21:33b. [G. Campbell Morgan, The Gospel According To Matthew, 1929, p. 259-260 claims Jesus' reference to a vineyard in the Matthew 21 parables (cf. Matt. 21:28, 33) in the Jewish mind recall the Isaiah 5:1-30 song about Israel as God's vineyard that He built for seeking the production of good grapes of righteousness, though it only produced wild grapes of sin. By referring to a vineyard in the context of judgment in this conversation, Jesus implied the husbandmen, Israel's leaders, had a role in Israel's evil!]
- C. When the harvest came, the landowner sent servants to the husbandmen to collect its yield, but they beat one, killed another and stoned a third, Matt. 21:34-35. The owner graciously sent another larger group of servants, but the husbandmen treated them like the others, Matt. 21:36. Last, the owner very graciously sent His son, saying, "They will reverence my son," but they reasoned if they slew him, they could seize his inheritance, the vineyard, Matt. 21:37-38. They thus seized the son, cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him, Matt. 21:39.
- D. Jesus asked the leaders what the landowner would do to the husbandmen in his return, and they said He would kill them and let out his vineyard to other men who would give him its yield in its seasons, Matthew 21:40-41.
- E. Christ then cited Psalm 118:22-23, asking, "Have ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" (Matt. 21:42). He then applied the parable and the Psalm 118 citation to Israel's leaders in Matthew 21:43-44:
 - 1. Jesus said God's kingdom would be taken from Israel's leaders (Matt. 21:43a), the husbandmen in the parable, for they had failed in their role in the vineyard of Israel by rejecting the prophets, Matt. 21:25-27a.
 - 2. Indeed, when the Father had sent them His own Son, Jesus, these leaders had repudiated Him, and would slay Him on the cross to acquire the nation Israel as their own possession, Matt. 21:23, 27b, 45-46 et al.
 - 3. In the end, God would take away their rule as leaders and give it to another generation of leaders in Israel who would bring forth its fruits of righteousness for God's glory, Matt. 21:43a; B. K. C., N. T., p. 70-71.
 - 4. Jesus then applied His citation of Psalm 118:22-23 to these leaders: He as the Stone was being rejected by the builders, Israel's religious leaders, but in the end He would become the head of the corner, the Messiah in His future Kingdom. As such, whoever would fall on Him in repentance would be broken in contrition, but on whomever that Stone fell in judgment, it would crush him, grinding him to powder, Matt. 21:44. This grinding to powder phrase recalls the Daniel 2:35 prediction of God's judgment on the last human empire by the stone cut out without hands, by Christ at His Second Coming, which Stone will grind the empire to powder and cause it to be blown away in obliterating judgment like chaff of the threshing floors.
- F. Israel's leaders understood the implications of Jesus' references to the Isaiah 5 and Daniel 2 passages in relation to His words to them, correctly perceiving He had predicted judgment against them, so they tried to take Him, but, fearing the people, they did not do so, for the people held Jesus to be a prophet, Matt. 21:45-46.

Lesson: Jesus taught Israel's leaders that their ungodly leadership rejection of John the Baptizer and Jesus would lead them into judgment and missing their opportunity to lead Israel in His future Messianic Kingdom.

Application: (1) May we accept the ministries of God's Bible prophets and (2) trust in Jesus to be saved, John 20:31. (3) May we who lead God's people repent of any self-serving, dominating, unbiblical leadership that we might do that mirror the sins of Israel's leaders lest we like they be removed of God from leading. (4) May we who oversee God's flock not view them as our possession to serve our personal interests, but as God's people for whose care we will be held accountable as undershepherds unto the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 5:1-4.