

---

### Matthew 21: 1-32 | The Background

---

- Verses 1-17 – Palm Sunday
  - Verses 1-7 – the preparation and the prophecy
  - Verses 8-11 – the triumphant entrance
  - Verses 12-17 – Jesus in the Temple
- Verses 18-32 – Monday
  - Verses 18-22 – the curse of the fig tree
  - Verses 23-32 – the standoff in the Temple
    - Verses 23-27 – the refusal to answer
    - Verses 28-32 – the illustration of the two sons
      - This is an illustration, not a parable. It does not reveal any mystery information.
      - The point is made clear in verse 31-32: the religious leadership was represented by the son that was *all talk, no action*.

---

### Matthew 21:33-44 | The Parable of the Husbandman

---

- Verse 33 –
  - This is **another parable**, but we since the previous verses are not spoken of as a parable and appear to be more of an illustration, this should be taken as “another parable of the parables of Jesus.”
    - This can be verified by [Mark 12:1](#), which says **he began to speak unto them by parables**, and then contains this parable in verses 1-11.
    - [Luke 20:9](#) also begins this parable in the same way (and the parable is contained in vv. 9-18).
  - The **householder** is the οἰκοδεσπότης [oikodespotes], that is, the *despot of the house*, or the “household ruler.” In modern terminology, the owner. The owner created and protected his new vineyard and **let it out to husbandmen** (tenant farmers) to care for it while he **went into a far country**.
  - No religious leader could hear these words without hearing an echo of [Isaiah 5:1-7](#).
  - The Householder is God, the vineyard is Israel ([Isaiah 5:7](#)), the hedge is the law ([Gal. 3:24](#)).
- Verse 34 –
  - The Greek for **drew near** is the same word used when the Scriptures speak of the Kingdom of God being *at hand*.
  - The servants (presumably the prophets) are sent to **receive the fruits** of the vineyard.
    - Notice that *fruit-bearing* was expected and required of the Jewish nation (thus the curse of the fig tree).
- Verses 35-36 –
  - From tradition and Scripture we know that Isaiah was sawn asunder. Jeremiah was beaten, Elijah was hounded and pursued. Zechariah was killed between the temple and the altar.

- Verses 37-38 –
  - In verse 23 the religious leaders asked **by what authority** Jesus was acting. He would not answer then, but verse 37 gives the answer: *Jesus is the Son of the owner of the vineyard.*
  - The vineyard (Israel) is God’s inheritance. This is the testimony throughout scripture.
    - Note that the English word refers to gaining something when the father dies.
    - The Hebrew and Greek words do not contain that idea, but rather the idea of legal property ownership alone (thus it is a word that can be used in relation to God’s ownership of Israel as well as the Son’s).
- Verse 39 –
  - Jesus **suffered without the gate** ([Heb. 13:12](#)) and these religious leaders shouted, **we have no king but Caesar** ([John 19:15](#)).
- Verses 40-41 –
  - Jesus let the religious leaders address their own fate in a fruitless attempt to get them to see their own wickedness.
  - The approach worked with Nathan and David ([2 Sam. 12:5-7](#)), but did not work with these unrepentant leaders.
- Verse 42 - Jesus quotes [Psalm 118:22](#) in His rhetorical question.
- Verse 43 –
  - By the use of the second person plural pronoun **you**, Jesus is addressing the religious leaders directly, letting them know that **the kingdom of God shall be taken from you**.
  - The prophetic word (and ultimate message of this parable) is that the kingdom would be **given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof**.
  - This is often interpreted to be “the gentiles” or “the church” or to “Christians individually.” However, there are several problems with these interpretations.
    - Neither the gentiles nor the church are a **nation** (or even an *ethnos*).
    - The **nation** is singular a neuter, not the form which you would use if the Kingdom was given to individual men and women (nor would you use the word *ethnos* for an individual).
    - The church is saved by grace through faith and not of works, and does not receive the kingdom by her works.
    - Any interpretation which gives the Kingdom to those who are not Jewish is replacement theology and fails to deliver the promises to Abraham.
  - The reference is to the nation that would be *born* in the future, yet had already been born in the past, thus would be *born again*.
    - This is a future nation of the Jews (thus fulfilling the promises to Abraham), after the age of grace has been removed (thus fruits are required).
    - Compare [Isaiah 66:7-14](#) which speaks of this new nation.
    - Can the word *ethnos* refer to the Jewish nation? Certainly! See [Acts 10:22](#).
- Verse 44 –
  - Jesus refers to Himself as **this stone** (a reference to verse 42).
  - It is a stern warning not to **fall on** him (in the negative sense of attack), or they will be **broken** (it is not Scripturally used in the positive sense, as it is sometimes in the modern sense).
  - Even more ominous, the one on whom He shall fall will be ground **to powder**, likely a reference to the coming of the Kingdom in [Daniel 2:44](#) where **break in pieces** is the Hebrew word for *pulverize*.