



Matthew 21:23-46

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WORLD

After seemingly refusing to answer the Jewish leaders' questions about His authority, Jesus told three parables that constituted a veiled reply to their query. ...When the following context is recognized as an unbroken literary succession with the initial confrontation between Jesus and His challengers, it becomes gradually clearer that His true answer, for those with ears to hear, was "I am the Son, and as the Son of the Father I do what I do by the authority that the Father has given Me. The real question is, How do you respond to that authority?" —Gene R. Smillie

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, the big question is—*Who is this Man?* (21:10). The people were looking for a conquering, political hero but Jesus came as the humble King, the Lamb of God, the Messiah who would conquer sin and death through His crucifixion and resurrection.

Jesus' identity and authority take center stage in Matthew 21-22. There are three Messianic actions (21:1-22), three Messianic parables (21:23-22:14), and three Messianic challenges (22:15-40).

JESUS EXPOSES THE HYPOCRISY OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS (21:23-32)

- The Challengers (21:23a)
- The Question (21:23b)
- The Counter-Question (21:24-25)
- The Hypocrisy (21:26-27)
- The Parable (21:28-32)

The two sons represent the children of Israel. The invitation to work in the vineyard is an invitation into God's kingdom. John the Baptist was the one who first preached this message (3:2).

The first _____ but then _____.

The second acts like he obeys but really _____.

It is _____ that reveals one's heart toward God.

Certainly the hypocrite is a secret atheist; for if he did believe there was a God, he dare not be so bold as to deceive Him to His face.

—Thomas Adams (1583-1652)

The problem with the hypocrite is his motivation. He does not want to be holy; he only wants to seem to be holy. He is more concerned with his reputation for righteousness than about actually becoming righteous. The approval of men matters more to him than the approval of God.

—Augustine (354-430)

A hypocrite says one thing but means something else. He pretends to do one thing but intends to do another. He is play-acting. He is hiding his real face under a mask.

—William Hendriksen

The leaders' question is no innocent inquiry but a dangerous trap.

—Craig L. Blomberg

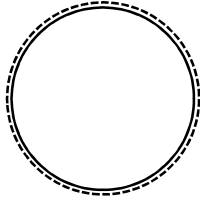
The tax gatherers and harlots were the dregs of Jewish society.

—Thomas Constable

The Fruit of a Changed Life:

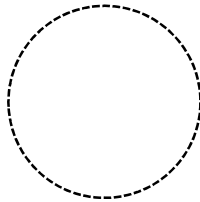
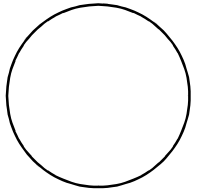
- Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).
- Increasing Love (1 Jn 3:14; 4:7).
- Good Works (Col 1:9-11).
- Sensitivity to Sin (1 Jn 1:5-10).

JESUS EXPLAINS THE HISTORY OF THE NATION (21:33-46)



CREATION—God’s Design (Genesis 1-2)

The kingdom of heaven was fully manifest on earth with a God-submitted man and his bride (Adam & Eve) ruling over the earth (cf. Psalm 8; Hebrews 2:5-9).



FALL—Man’s Rebellion (Genesis 3)

Adam’s sin brought consequences on humanity and on the earth. The earth is no longer under submission to God’s authority (cf. Matt. 4:8-9; 2 Cor. 4:4).

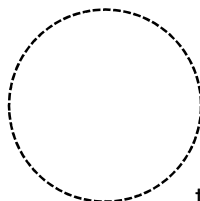
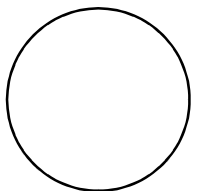
COVENANT—God’s Plan of Redemption (Genesis 12)

God’s plan of redemption involved a man (Abraham) and his seed (Israel).

- The landowner is _____ (Isaiah 5:1-2).
- The vineyard is _____ (Isaiah 5:7; Psalm 80:8-16).
- The tenants are the _____ of Israel (Ezek. 34:1-10).
- The servants are the _____ of Israel (2 Chron. 36:14-16).
- The landowner’s “beloved son” is _____ (Luke 20:13).

JESUS CHRIST—God’s Act of Redemption

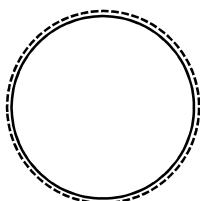
Jesus, the Son of God, brought the kingdom “near” (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7). Israel’s rejection of the Son demonstrated both the sinfulness of man and the love of God as a door into His kingdom was fully opened (Rom. 5:8).



CHURCH—God’s Agents of Redemption

God temporarily set aside the nation of Israel as His agents of redemption in the world and is now working through the church—a “holy nation” of Jews and Gentiles who have trusted in Jesus the Messiah as Savior (1 Peter 2:4-10).

ISRAEL—God’s Agents of Redemption in the Tribulation (Rom. 11:1-32)



MILLENNIUM—Heaven’s Kingdom on Earth

Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and His bride (the church) will reign over a redeemed earth. Israel will be secure in their land and Jerusalem will be the centerpiece of worship for the whole world (Isaiah 11).

I cannot answer the question, “What ought I to do?” unless I first answer the question, “Of what story am I a part?”
—Alasdair MacIntyre

This parable has long been a battleground for complex debate.
—D. A. Carson

The story of an absentee landowner reflects a familiar economic situation at the time; some of the chief priests and elders to whom Jesus is speaking would probably have owned land away from Jerusalem. —R. T. France

Jesus is the rejected stone who became the chief cornerstone (Ps. 118:22-23). He is also the stone over which people stumble (Is. 8:14) and the stone which will crush all other kingdoms and fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:31-45).

Matthew 21:43 could be the key verse in the entire argument of Matthew. —Mark Bailey

As the apple is not the cause of the apple tree, but a fruit of it: even so good works are not the cause of our salvation, but a sign and a fruit of the same.
—Daniel Cawdrey (1588-1664)

God wants spiritual fruit not religious nuts. —Anonymous

Whatever your gifts, accomplishments, or virtues, they cannot produce fruit if you are detached from Jesus Christ. Christians who think they are bearing fruit apart from the Vine are only tying on artificial fruit. They run around grunting and groaning to produce fruit but accomplish nothing. Fruit is borne not by trying but by abiding.
—John MacArthur, Jr.