

Mathew 21:23-41.

1. Jesus's Authority Questioned: 23-27.

In Jesus' last week of life, He pleaded with Israel for salvation; leaders and followers alike.

They questioned him about the authority of His preaching, healing, accepting worship, cleansing the temple.

In His previous visit on the day before, Jesus drove out the moneychangers and merchants from the temple courts. Now He returned there to teach, unafraid of the religious leaders.

The religious leaders raised the question of Jesus' authority, and He answered by raising the question of their competence to judge such an issue. Their ability to judge John the Baptist and his ministry was a measure of their ability to judge Jesus as well.

These men knew about God and John but they didn't believe in God and despised John; admitting that John's Baptism of repentance was from heaven or men would hold them responsible for foolish unbelief, which is eternally consequential.

He did everything in His authority as God and as a Man under the authority of His Father.

2. (28-32) The Parable Of The Two Sons.

This parable shows us two different kinds of sons; both under obligation to serve their father individually, differently and speedily.

One son promises to comply but doesn't, the other out-rightly disobeys but changed his mind to comply.

What matters is living for God, not saying the right words. The religious leaders were good at talking righteous talk, but their stubbornly unrepentant hearts showed that repentant sinners would enter the kingdom before them.

The tax collectors, the prostitutes and every category of sinners were getting saved, while the religious were far off from God.

3. 33-41) The Parable Of The Wicked Servants.

The men who were supposed to manage his vineyard mistreated and killed the messengers sent by the landowner. Finally he sent his son, and they killed him also - foolishly believing they would take control of the vineyard. The response of the landowner was to judge and destroy the wicked vinedressers.

The Old Testament often used the picture of a vineyard to speak of Israel (Psalm 80:8, Jeremiah 2:21, and especially Isaiah 5:1-7).

Again, they saw that the owner of the vineyard had the right to expect the fruits in their seasons. In the same way, God looked for fruit from Israel's leadership, but found little (as shown in the fig tree incident).

*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone: Jesus quoted this from **Psalm 118** to remind them that in rejecting they were calling for judgment on themselves. Though they reject Him, He is still the chief cornerstone.*

He is also the stone of Isaiah 8:13-15 that people stumble over, the foundation stone and precious cornerstone of Isaiah 28:16, and the stone of Daniel 2:34, 44-45 that destroys the world in rebellion to God.

The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it: Jesus warned the religious leaders that if they continued their rejection of God and His Messiah, they could expect that God would pass the leadership of His work on earth to others.

Whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder: The choice before the religious leaders is the choice before every person. We can be broken in humble surrender before God or be completely broken in judgment.

Galatians 5:22 – *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness and faithfulness.*

2 Peter 1:5-8 - *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love. For if these are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*