

The Householder, the Tenants and the Son

Lesson * 21: (Mt. 21:33-46; Mk. 11:1-12; Lk. 20:9-19; Isaiah 5; COL 284-306)

In this lesson we will study the parable which is found in Matthew 21:33-46. This tragic story begins with a description of the bountiful blessings which God poured out upon the nation of Israel. It ends, however, with the rejection of that people and the adoption of the Gentiles as God's chosen nation. Was this parable meant for the Jews only or is there the possibility that we could repeat their sad history today? Because of the lessons length, it will take us two sessions to study it. Let us begin our considerations with the textual setting, the historical background and the meaning of the symbols.

The Textual Setting of the Parable

1. What great event took place the day before Jesus told this parable? (Mt.21:1-14) The _____ entry into Jerusalem. This event took place on Palm Sunday.
2. Where was Jesus when he told this parable and to whom did He tell it? "And when he [Jesus] was come into the _____, the chief _____ and the _____ of the people came unto him. . . ." (Mt. 21:23)

Note: The parable was told the day after the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as can be seen in Matthew 21:18. This would be on the Monday before the crucifixion.

3. Who's temple did Jesus enter before narrating this parable? "And Jesus went into the temple of _____. . . . And said unto them, It is written, _____ house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Mt. 21:12-13)

The Symbols of the Parable

4. Read the story carefully and then explain what you think is represented by the following symbols in the parable? (The answers are found throughout the chapter in Christ's Object Lessons. **Warning:** Do not look at the note below this question before you fill in the blanks. **No cheating please!!**)

The householder _____ The husbandmen _____

Act of leasing _____ The vineyard _____

The tower _____ The hedge _____

The servants _____ The Son _____

The fruits _____ Other husbandmen _____

Note: The renowned theologian, Joachim Jeremias, has correctly grasped the meaning of the symbols: “The vineyard is clearly Israel, the tenants are Israel’s rulers and leaders, the owner of the vineyard is God, the messengers are the prophets, the son is Christ, the punishment of the husbandmen symbolizes the ruin of Israel, the ‘other people’ (Matt. 21:43) are the Gentile Church.” (Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, p. 70)

The Parable’s Six Historical Stages

5. How is the first historical stage of the parable described? “And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his _____ to the husbandmen, that they might receive the _____ of it.” (Mt. 21:34)
6. How is the second historical stage described? “_____, he sent _____ servants more than the _____; and they did unto them likewise.” (Mt. 21:36)
7. What important event took place at the third historical stage? “But _____ of all he sent unto them his _____, saying, they will _____ my son.” (Mt. 21:37)
8. Under the fourth stage, what happened with the original husbandmen? “He [God] will miserably _____ those wicked men. . . .” (Mt. 21:41)
9. In the fifth stage, what did the householder do with his vineyard? He “will let out [lease] his vineyard unto _____ husbandmen, which shall render unto him the _____ in their seasons.” (Mt. 21:41)
10. What does the parable say would happen in the sixth and final stage with those who rejected the Stone? “And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will _____ him to _____.” (Mt. 21:44)
11. To which great prophecy does the previous question allude? The stone “shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms , and it shall stand for ever.” (Dan. 2:44)

Note: This parable vividly describes the six stages of Israel’s history. **1)** After their election at Mt. Sinai, God sent Israel a plethora of prophetic messengers, but Israel mistreated them so God allowed Israel to be taken captive to Babylon (II Chronicles 35:15, 16). **2)** Following the Babylonian captivity, God sent them more messengers and Israel did likewise with them (Mt. 23:37). **3)** As a last resort, God sent His own Son, Jesus, and they cut Him off. **4)** As a result, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 A. D., **5)** the kingdom was removed from literal Israel and given to the Gentiles (Mt. 21:43; Acts 13:46-47). But this is not the end of the story for those who rejected Jesus. **6)** Under the last stage the stone which the builders rejected will pulverize those who rejected Him. Keep in mind, for the time being, that this will take place on occasion of the great post-millennial judgment of Revelation 20:11-15 (more on this later)!

The First Application: Literal Israel

1. To which Old Testament Prophecy did Jesus allude when he told the parable of the vineyard?
_____ (COL 284-285)
2. Who was the leader of Israel in the wilderness? “_____ was the leader of the children of Israel in their _____ wanderings. Enshrouded in the _____ of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, He _____ and guided them.” (COL 287)
3. What blessings did God pour out upon Israel when He took them out of Egypt? “He preserved them from the _____ of the wilderness, He brought them into the land of _____, and in the sight of all the nations that acknowledged not _____ He established Israel as His own chosen _____, the Lord’s vineyard.” (COL 287)

Note: The Greek word *exedoto* [“to let out”] in Mt. 21:33 seems to indicate that Jesus began to relate the history of Israel at the point of the exodus from Egypt.

4. What do the hedge and tower represent? “The were _____ about by the precepts of His _____, the everlasting principles of _____, justice and purity. . . . And as the _____ in the vineyard, God placed in the midst of the land His holy _____.” (COL 287, 288)
5. What was God’s glorious plan for the children of Israel? “God desired to make His people Israel a _____ and a _____. . . . The glory of God, His majesty and power, were to be revealed in all their _____. . . . God furnished them with every _____ for becoming the greatest _____ on earth.” (COL 288)
6. Did God’s plan embrace Israel alone or did it include all the nations of the world? “Through the Jewish nation it was God’s purpose to impart rich _____ to all _____. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His _____ to the whole _____.” (COL 286)
7. What two passages from the book of Deuteronomy does Ellen White quote to describe God’s plan for Israel? _____ (COL 288-290; study these texts carefully)
8. How does Ellen White describe God’s awesome plan for the salvation of the world? “But it was God’s purpose that the by revelation of His _____ through Israel men should be _____ unto Him. To all the world the _____ invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the _____ service _____ was to be uplifted before the nations.” (COL 290)
9. What were the nations to do as they understood the gospel plan? “All. . . . were to _____ themselves with His chosen people. As the _____ of Israel increased they were to _____ their borders, until their _____ should embrace the world.” (COL 290)

10. Why did Israel fail to fulfill God's plan? "The blessings they had _____ brought no blessing to the _____. All their _____ were appropriated for their own _____." (COL 291)
11. What did the husbandmen do with the vineyard and its fruit? "The husbandmen who had been placed in charge of the Lord's vineyard were _____ to their trust. The _____ and _____ were not faithful instructors of the people. . . . They desired to appropriate the _____ of the vineyard. It was their study to _____ attention and homage to _____." (COL 292) The Greek of Mt. 21:34 says: "**His** fruit".
12. What did the rabbis do which led the people astray? "The people lived in _____ unrest, for they could not fulfill the _____ laid down by the rabbis. As they saw the _____ of keeping man-made commandments, they became careless in regard to the _____ of God." (COL 292)
13. What did God do to try and bring Israel back to His original plan? "Prophets and messengers were _____ to urge God's claim upon the husbandmen; but instead of being welcomed, they were treated as _____. The husbandmen _____ and killed them." (COL 293)
14. What biblical corroboration sustains the view of Ellen White in question #13? "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his _____, rising up bedtimes, and sending; because he had _____ on his people, and on his dwelling place; but they _____ the messengers of God, and despised his _____, and misused his _____, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (II Chron. 36:15-16; see also, Mt. 23:29-37)
- Note:** According to II Chronicles 36:17-20 the wrath of God was poured out against Israel and as a consequence they were taken captive to Babylon for 70 years.
15. When Israel was restored to their land after the Babylonian captivity, who helped them in the work of restoration? "And with them were the _____ of God _____ them." (Ezra 5:2)
- Note:** In his parable, Jesus recalled that God sent a second group of messengers to gather fruit from the vineyard (Mt. 21:36). Jesus knew Hebrew history. After the Babylonian captivity, God did raise up a plethora of prophets and messengers. Some of these were: Haggai, Zechariah, Joshua the high priest, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi. Though the people started out well under these consecrated leaders [faithful husbandmen], the book of Malachi reveals that their successors [unfaithful husbandmen] led the people into apostasy once more.
16. What did God do as a last resort to try and reach the Jewish nation? "But _____ of all he sent unto them his _____, saying, they will _____ my son." (Mt. 21:37)

Note: The gospel of Mark says that the householder sent “a **beloved** son” which is the very title applied to Jesus in Mark 1:9-11. The expression “last of all” indicates finality. The son will make the last call for the Jewish nation to produce fruit. If they don’t, they will be cut down and cast into the fire (see, Mt. 3:8, 10; Lk. 13:1-6; Mk. 11:12-14, 20)

17. What did the husbandmen do with the beloved son? “But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the _____; come let us _____ on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him _____ of the vineyard and _____ him.” (Mt. 21:38-39)

Note: Joachim Jeremias describes the customs of the day: “The arrival of the son allows them to assume that the owner is dead, and that the son has come to take up his inheritance. If they kill him, the vineyard becomes ownerless property which they can claim as being first on the spot.” (Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, pp. 75-76). In the light of Luke 20:9, Jeremias’ remarks appear accurate. There we are told that the householder went into a far country “for a long time.” This seems to indicate that the vinedressers believed the owner was an absentee landlord. In their minds, it was only the son who stood between them and the inheritance.

Ironically, if the Jews had accepted Jesus, they would have become joint heirs with Him of the Father’s promises (Rom. 8:17). But by rejecting Him, they forfeited any right to the inheritance. The promises were made to Abraham and his Seed (Gal. 3:16) and only those who choose to unite with the Seed will inherit the promises (Gal. 3:29; see the conversation of Jesus with the Jewish leaders in John 8). Thus the Jewish leaders caused that which they wished to prevent and prevented that which they wished to cause (see, also Jn. 11:47-52).

Jesus was killed after being cast out of Jerusalem (Jn. 19:17; Heb. 13:12-13). In this sense He was cast out of the vineyard and killed.

18. What did God do when the Jews chose Barabbas instead of Jesus and declared, “we have no king but Caesar”? “Their decision was _____ in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the _____, the book which no man could open. In all its _____ this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is _____ by the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” (COL 294; GC 666-667)

Note: Ellen White has stated elsewhere about this book: “There in His open hand lay the book, the roll of the history of God’s providences, the prophetic history of nations and the church. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and the history of all ruling powers in the nations. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the influence of every nation, tongue, and people from the beginning of earth’s history to its close.” (Manuscript Releases, vol. 9 [release # 667], p. 7)

19. According to Matthew 21:41, who pronounced the doom of the Jewish nation? “_____ say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other _____, which shall render him the fruits in their _____.” (Mt. 21: 41)
20. What did the Jews say when they spoke their own doom? “God _____.” (Lk. 20:16)
21. What happened to the Jewish nation for its rejection of the Messiah? “Jerusalem was _____, the temple was laid in ruins, and its site plowed like a field. . . . The privileges they had _____, the work they had slighted was entrusted to _____.” (COL 296)
22. What words did Jesus pronounce when he left the Jewish temple for the last time? “Behold, _____ house is left unto you _____. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye say, _____ is he that cometh in the _____ of the Lord.” (Mt. 23:38-39)
23. According to Ellen White, at what occasion will the Jewish leaders pronounce the words of Matthew 23:39? “Every _____ in that vast multitude is turned to behold the glory of the Son of God. With one _____ the wicked hosts exclaim: ‘Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.’” (GC 662)

What About Today?

1. Does this parable apply alone to the Jewish nation? “The parable of the vineyard applies not alone to the Jewish nation. It has a _____ for _____. The church in this generation has been endowed by God with great _____ and blessings, and He expects corresponding _____.” (COL 296)
2. In how broad a spectrum does God expect his people to reveal right principles to the world? “These principles are to be manifest in the _____ Christian, in the _____, in the _____ and in every _____ established for God’s service.” (COL 296)
3. What dangers does the church of today face? “It is when _____ building is neglected, when the _____ of the soul is lacking, when the simplicity of _____ is lost sight of, that pride and love of _____ demand magnificent church edifices, splendid adornings and _____ ceremonies.” (COL 298)
4. What is Jesus hungering for in His church today? “Christ _____ to receive from his vineyard the fruit of _____ and _____. He looks for the principles of _____ and goodness. Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of

- _____ and character to be revealed in those who are Christ's _____." (COL 298)
5. Why does God impart His blessings to us? "God imparts His _____ to us that we also may _____, and thus make known His _____ to the world." (COL 300)
 6. Does God ever require of us that which is impossible to perform? "God makes no requirement without making _____ for its fulfillment. Through the _____ of Christ we may accomplish everything that God _____." (COL 301)
 7. To which church is the Laodicean message especially applicable? "Shall Seventh-day Adventists walk in the same path as did the _____ nation? Shall the message to the Laodicean church be applicable to _____ people? Shall those who have seen great _____, who have had large _____ and many _____, cease to do service as witnesses for Christ?" (Manuscript Releases, volume 18 [release # 1330], p. 193)
 8. Is the Seventh-day Adventist church today in danger of following the same path as ancient Israel? "Because thou sayest, I am _____, and increased with _____, and have need of nothing." (Rev. 3:17)
 9. What does Jesus say He will do to the church today if it fails to repent? "So then because thou art _____, and neither cold nor hot, I will _____ thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:16)
 10. Is Jesus standing outside the door hungering for the fruit of holiness? "Behold, I stand at the door, and _____; if any man hear my _____, and open the door, I will come in to him and will _____ with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20)
 11. **Thought Question:** Has God given the Seventh-day Adventist church great prophetic light in the areas of education, medical work, publishing, family life, lifestyle, health, etc.? Ha the church today generally obeyed the light? _____

The Broadest Meaning of the Parable

1. Does this parable apply only to Israel and the church? "God claims the whole _____ as His _____." (COL 301)
2. What is the great sin of the world today? "Ingratitude to God, the _____ of opportunities and _____, the selfish appropriation of God's gifts—these were comprised in the sin that brought _____ upon Israel. They are bringing ruin upon the world today." (COL 302)

3. In what condition are God's people found as the world rushes to its ruin? "Men are in _____. Multitudes are perishing. But how few of the _____ followers of Christ are burdened for these souls. . . . There is a _____, a _____ upon the people of God, which prevents them from understanding the _____ of the hour." (COL 303)

4. What did Israel fail to do when they entered the land of Canaan? (COL 303) _____

5. How is our very own Fresno Central church repeating the same error as ancient Israel? "With the whole _____ before them in need of the gospel, professed Christians _____ where they themselves can _____ the gospel _____. They do not feel the necessity of occupying _____ territory, carrying the message of salvation into regions _____. . . . Are they less _____ than was the Jewish church?" (COL 303)

6. What awesome statement does Ellen White make about God's people today? "The professed followers of Christ are on _____ before the heavenly _____; but the coldness of their _____ and the feebleness of their _____ in God's service mark them as _____." (COL 303)

7. What will happen with many professed followers of Jesus when their names come in review before the heavenly universe? "Many there are against whose names will be found written in the books of heaven, Not _____, but _____. By many who bear Christ's name, His glory is _____, His beauty _____, His honor withheld." (COL 304)

8. Who were particularly to blame for the apostasy of Israel? "For the rejection of Christ, with the results that followed, they [the leaders] were responsible. A nation's _____ and a nation's _____ were due to the _____ leaders." (COL 305)

9. Is the same error being committed today by the Christian church? "From many of the pulpits of the churches the people are _____ that the law of God is not binding upon them. Human _____, ordinances, and _____ are exalted. Pride and self-satisfaction because of the _____ of God are fostered, while the _____ of God are ignored." (COL 305)

10. What can we learn from Israel's failure? "The result of Israel's _____ is before us. Will the church of _____ take warning?" (COL 306)

