

Session 12: The Parable of Matthew 21

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 12)

Now let us read the parable we left off reading in our previous session.

Matthew 21:33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: ³⁴ And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. ³⁵ And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. ³⁷ But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. ³⁸ But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. ³⁹ And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. ⁴⁰ When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? ⁴¹ They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. ⁴² Jesus saith unto them, Did 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 marvellous in our eyes?***

This is a quote from Psalm 118:22.

Psalms 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. ²³ This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

Identifying the Elements of Matthew 21:

- The “stone” which was rejected was Jesus Christ.
- The time of him being refused was at his first coming.
- The “builders” are the religious leaders of Israel’s vain religious system (VRS).
- God has made Jesus Christ the “head of the corner;” which is to say that everything he will do with Israel is based upon the work and provision of his Son – Jesus Christ.

Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and **given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**

- The nation which will “bring forth the fruits” is the believing remnant.

For now, suffice it to say that in Matthew 21, Jesus is:

- Dealing with the issue of Israel's nationhood.
- Dealing with the Pharisees, chief priests, etc.: leaders of the nation and leaders of the vain religious system.
- Predicting their destruction (from their positions of leadership in Israel as well as their physical destruction in the 5th installment of the 5th course of punishment).
- Identifying the believing remnant as the "nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43).

This believing remnant that is being called out by that gospel of the kingdom is the nation which will be 'called by his name.' (Remember Isaiah 65).

That remnant will be born during the travail of the destruction of the nation (Isaiah chapters 65 and 66, a nation 'born in a day'). They are the nation Jesus refers to in verse 43.

Notice it is not 'the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to the nations,' as though Jesus is talking about the Gentiles. He is talking about the prophesied nation; the remnant that will be 'called by his name,' when he destroys the nation that is 'not called by his name' The believing remnant is the true Israel of God and God will destroy apostate Israel.

In verses 41 through 43, Jesus is telling Israel's religious leaders, as leaders of Israel's vain religious system, 'this is the decision you are now facing.'

In response to what Jesus says, they will do exactly what phase one of their vain religious system (VRS) calls for; they will kill him. Just as Jesus described in verse 39, they will 'catch the heir, cast him out of the vineyard, and slay him.'

Jesus is telling them that if they persist in their rejection of him, then that stone is going to fall on them and grind them to power out in the fifth installment. But what we are mostly after in all of this is found in verse 44.

Matthew 21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. ⁴⁵ And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. ⁴⁶ But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

From his perspective at the time of Matthew 21, Jesus is saying that Israel would be given the opportunity (during the extension of mercy) to 'fall on that stone and be broken.' Notice, that is not the same thing as stumbling over it or tripping over it; that's not the stumblingstone issue.

'Falling on that stone' means for them to fall down in worship, fall to their knees on that stone in repentance of mind concerning him, and being "broken" in spirit because they recognize what they have done when they rejected him.

The extension of mercy (Acts 1-8) is Israel's opportunity to leave their foundation of the vain religious system and fall on that stone.

But what if they will not do that? What if they persist on standing upon the 'foundation of their vain religious system' during the opening part of phase two of what their vain religious system is producing during the extension of mercy? What if Israel responds negatively to the testimony of the third member of the Godhead (given through the remnant) during that time?

If they do, then once that extension of mercy is over, just as the wicked husbandmen in the parable, Jesus dedicates them to be miserably destroyed, or as he says in the rest of verse 44, "but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

They have got to fall on the stone here (during the extension of mercy) or the stone falls on them there (fifth installment) and grinds them to powder, which is what it means to be miserably destroyed.

Let us bring this to an end with regard to Matthew 21. If they do not voluntarily fall on that rock, then Paul describes (in Romans 9) the result of their failure; they will wind up "stumbling" over him as the "stumblingstone."

Therefore, in Romans 9, Paul calls him a "stumblingstone." So the question is this: when did Israel 'stumble' over the stumblingstone? They did not stumble at the crucifixion. The crucifixion is the 'rejection' of the stone. They stumbled during the extension of mercy.

Romans 9:33 *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 13: Background on the Prophets

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 13)

The original reference for both Jesus (in Matthew 21) and Paul (in Romans 9) is in Isaiah. I want us to look at something over in Isaiah's book, but first let me give you a bit of background on Isaiah.

Background on the Prophets in General

- Isaiah through Malachi are all the 5th course of punishment prophets.
- Contained in the prophets are seven major doctrinal issues.
- The prophets are commonly divided into two groups: the Major and Minor Prophets.
- The Major Prophets contain information concerning all seven doctrinal issues.
- Each of the Minor Prophets only addresses a few of those issues.

But there is another breakdown of the prophets in the Old Testament we now need to be aware of. By observing the things set forth in Isaiah through Malachi, we can see that there is another twofold breakdown of the prophets: 1) Isaiah through Zephaniah, and 2) Haggai through Malachi.

Just as there is an order and progression in Paul's epistles to us, the 5th course of punishment prophets also come in a divinely designed order, and you go from milk to meat in Isaiah through Malachi.

Therefore, the basic understanding of the 5th course of punishment is set forth in Isaiah. Jeremiah builds upon Isaiah. Ezekiel builds upon Jeremiah. Daniel builds upon them and they progress on.

There is an observable pattern in each of the prophets. Each prophet begins his book by describing the installment of the 5th course of his day. In addition, each one of the prophets ends his book by talking about the final installment of the 5th course of punishment and the kingdom. Everything in between is leading up to that endpoint. Each one of the prophets follows this precise pattern.

For example, let us look at this progression in Isaiah. Chapter 1 starts out with the timetable of Isaiah's present day.

Isaiah 1:1 *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.*

So where is this on the timetable?

Isaiah served as a prophet to Judah from 740–681 B.C. He was contemporary with Hosea (753-715 B.C.) and Micah (743-687 B.C.).

During his ministry, the kings of Judah were Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. These kings of Judah were under the 4th course of punishment in their day with the threat of the 5th course of punishment coming upon them.

In the next verse, Isaiah pens God’s indictment against Judah.

Isaiah 1:2 *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.*

God indicts them for their departure from him and for their wickedness.

Isaiah 1:3 *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*

In verse 4, God says they have provoked him unto anger.

Isaiah 1:4 *Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.*

If we were looking at this time period back in Leviticus 26, we would see the “fury” concept, indicating that God is reaching the upper limits of his tolerance with them. They are about to pass the point of no return with him and when they do, 2 Chronicles 36 says that there is not going to be any remedy offered to them; the 5th course of punishment will come upon them.

Isaiah was one of the prophets God raised up to give Judah that warning.

Isaiah 1:5 *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.*

In other words why should God continue to punish you under the 4th course of punishment; it does not seem to change you (Judah) at all.

Isaiah 1:6 *From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.*

Judah has had Isaiah’s ministry but they have not tried to fix themselves.

Isaiah 1:7 *Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by*

strangers. ⁸ And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

This terminology, “as a cottage in a vineyard,” and “as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,” will not make much sense unless we are familiar with the harvesting procedures back at that time. What this is referring to is this: at the time to harvest, there was a “cottage” or “lodge” (a house) where all the harvesters stayed during the harvest. Once the harvest was over, everyone left the house, leaving it vacant.

Isaiah is saying, just like those houses are left vacant, that is the way it is going to be when the 5th course of punishment comes upon you.

The land is going to be desolate just like those houses.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 14: Background on the Prophets, Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 14)

Isaiah 1:9 *Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.*

Isaiah 1:1 *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.*

That is complete destruction. But God is going to preserve a remnant.

But what we are mainly after here is that Isaiah is opening up his book by describing the first installment of the 5th course of punishment. He sets forth the indictment against them and describes the judgment that will shortly come upon them.

Now let us turn to the end of Isaiah's book (the last chapter) and observe that it ends with the final installment of the 5th course of punishment and the establishment of the kingdom.

Isaiah 66:5 *Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but **he shall appear** to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.*

Isaiah 66:14 *And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. ¹⁵ For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. ¹⁶ For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.*

How do we know that this is not just a reference to the Babylonian Captivity? Because at this "appearance," the Lord pleads "with all flesh." That is what happens at the "great and terrible day of the Lord" at his 2nd Advent.

Isaiah 66:17 *They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.*

The issue here is that the Lord will consume the apostate element along with the Gentiles.

Isaiah 66:18 *For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. ¹⁹ And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the*

nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

Declaring His glory among the Gentiles does not happen until the kingdom.

Isaiah 66:20 *And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.²¹ And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.²² For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.²³ And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.²⁴ And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*

Isaiah 30:27 *Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire:*

Isaiah 30:31 *For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.³² And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it.³³ For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.*

Mark 9:43 *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:⁴⁴ Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.⁴⁵ And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:⁴⁶ Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.⁴⁷ And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:*

Matthew 5:21 *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:²² But I say unto*

*you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, **shall be in danger of hell fire.***

What Isaiah does here is end with the “great and terrible day of the Lord” and the kingdom. That is the way all of the prophets write.

Space for personal reflection and notes