

Terrible Sons & Wicked Tenants

Matthew 21:23-46

I. THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY (23-27)

A. The Hostile Challenge (23)—*not a sincere question; it is a public interrogation*

1. Deliberate Disruption—an attempt to silence
2. Determined Doubt—committed to unbelief, unreasonable
3. Decisive Denial—not really a question but a statement of unbelief
4. Willful Rebellion—refusing to yield to a higher authority

B. The Diagnostic Question (24-25a)—*the source of John the Baptist's authority*

1. Do you have the ability to discern the work of God?
2. Are you willing to submit to the authority of God?

C. The Unconvincing Answer (25b-27)—*the politician's answer: "we don't know"*

1. Calculated (25-26)—concerned what will advance their cause, not what is true
2. Evasive (27)—noncommittal; refuse to say what they really think
3. Cowardly (26, 46)—afraid of the crowd

II. THE PARABLE OF TWO SONS (28-32)

A. Recognizing the Characters

1. The First Son—Gentiles and Obvious Sinners; noncompliant, rude, no promise
2. The Second Son—Self-righteous, unbelieving Jews; agreeable, polite, false promise

B. Doing the Father's Will

1. Knowing the Right Thing (Jn 4:17)—moral recognition (understanding)
2. Saying the Right Thing (Mat 15:8)—verbal commitment (profession), lip-service, promise
3. Doing the Right Thing (1 Jn 2:3-6)—actual obedience to God (faith in action), fruit of salvation

C. Closing a Foolish Mind

1. Rejecting the Evidence—cling to their faith in a lie
2. Refusing to Repent—to change your mind, turn and go in a different direction

D. **Entering the Kingdom**—*only the repentant, not the self-righteous*

III. **THE PARABLE OF WICKED TENANTS** (33-41, 45; Isa 5:1-7) God is the owner; the vineyard is the people of God (the Jewish Church); the tenants are the chief priests and elders.

A. **Their Position**—*benefiting from the use of someone else's property, responsible to the owner*

1. **Stewardship**—managing someone else's property, household, finances, or affairs
2. **Leadership**—the position, office or ability to guides or directs others; showing the way by going first

B. **Their Wickedness**—not just negligent and delinquent; they were active *criminals*

1. **Defied the Owner (God)**—refused to acknowledge or pay
2. **Mistreated the Servants (Prophets)**—shows contempt for the one who sent them
3. **Murdered the Son (Jesus)**—wanted His inheritance, His property and His position

C. **Their Doom**

1. **Miserable Death and Destruction**—death and Hell, the destruction of Jerusalem
2. **Replaced with New Tenants**—The Jewish Kingdom taken away, status given to the Gentile Church—Jews and Gentiles together as the new people of God who will recognize the authority of the Son and produce the fruit of salvation

IV. **THE STONE OF DESTINY** (42-43; Ps 118:22; Dan 2:34, 44; Acts 4:11; Rom 9:30-33; 1 Pet 2:4-8)—*Jesus is the Stone*

A. **Chosen**—*God's Chosen One; this is the Lord's doing*

B. **Rejected** (Isa 8:14-15; Jn 1:11)—*the stone the builders rejected*; The People of God rejected the Messiah that God sent to save them.

C. **Invincible** (Dan 2:34-35, 44-45)—*the "rock of offense" will make you or break you.*

D. **Essential** (Eph 2:20-21)—*foundational, key*

All of God's Word points to Him; all of God's plan rests and hinges upon Jesus.

E. **Marvelous** (Isa 55:8-9; Mat 19:26)—*miraculous, amazing, something to marvel over*