

The Wicked Tenants

Matthew 21

Check the beginning of Matthew 21. What point in Jesus' ministry does the chapter describe?

Looking at Matthew 21:12-16, describe the relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders.

Read Matthew 21:23-26

The temple leaders questioned Jesus' authority because they:

_____ *were really interested and wanted to know.*

_____ *hoped He'd say something that could be viewed as self-condemning.*

T/F The meeting improved understanding and relations between Jesus and the religious leaders.

How does Matthew 21:27-32 support your answer?

Read Matthew 21:33-43

Identify the different aspects of the parable. *Compare Isaiah 45:1-7*

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| _____ landowner | a. religious community of Israel |
| _____ landowner's servants | b. religious leaders |
| _____ tenants | c. Jesus Christ |
| _____ the son | d. God |
| _____ the vineyard | e. prophets |

What were the religious leaders "renting" from God, and what kind of "rent" could they pay?

Why didn't the landlord "boot out" the tenants right away, instead of sending servants to suffer more abuse? *Check Psalm 145:8 and II Peter 3:8-10.*

T/F The tenants didn't really know it was the landlord's son they had killed. Support your answer.

Considering Matthew 21:14-16 & 23-27, do you think the leaders recognized Jesus as the Son of God?

Why or why not? Check also John 10:30-33.

Read John 11:43-53.

How might this episode have added tension in the section we're studying?

According to John 11:48, what was the primary concern the leaders had about Jesus?

Why do you think the leaders understood Jesus' parable? *Check Matthew 21:43-46.*

State the truth of the parable – “the central message” – in a short summary statement.

What does that message mean to you?

For Us:

Before we point fingers and feel smug, do we ever...

- maneuver to have the final say at a church meeting?
- assume we have more importance in church leadership because we're more involved?
- express concern about what's happening, because we're the ones paying the bills?
- consider going to another church, or wish someone else would, because things aren't going right?
- get upset or hurt because our recommendation isn't adopted?

“The greatest privilege a man can enjoy is to have the kingdom of God entrusted to him. The Jews were the most favored people of antiquity. They had the oracles of God committed to them. When others were in darkness, they enjoyed the light of revelation; but, instead of thanking Jehovah for these things, they only plumed (congratulated) themselves upon them, as if, simply because they had received them, they were better than their neighbors. We condemn them for that; but let us take heed that we are not therein uttering our own doom. For we are not where they were nay, our privileges are vastly more exalted than theirs. What they had merely in type and symbol, we have in reality.” -- William M. Taylor

- What warning and cause for repentance do you find in these words?

- How would you put the warning into your own words?

How does Luke 18:9-14 keep things in proper perspective?

I Corinthians 1:26-31 also shows us the true source of confidence in the church. Explain.

Study the verses, looking for mention of ownership, power, service and responsibility within the church.

Matthew 18:1-4

Matthew 28:18-20

John 13:3-17

John 15:16

Romans 12:1-3

John 10:11-18

John 21:15-17

Luke 17:7-10

Working from your understanding of the passages used above, develop a statement about how a Christian views his or her life in the church.

Does your statement reflect ownership or servanthood?