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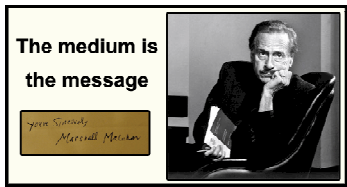
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Monday, March 20, 2017
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LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

LEARNING FROM MATTHEW — JESUS THE PROPHET AND RABBI
(Matthew 20 & 21) Lord's Day, March 26, 2017

OVERVIEW

"Session 4 & 5" for the *Explore the Bible Series: Just Who is This Jesus?*



I once did a little bit of theoretical work with one Marshall McLuhan. He argued convincingly that the medium by

A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PERSON WHO THINKS SHE/HE DOESN'T NEED THE 2003 SANTA FE HYUNDAI WITH 117K MILES AND AT A PRICE OF \$117 MILLION?

which a message is communicated changes the message in more than just stylistic nuance. He was the one who coined the phrase, *the medium is the message*. When we look at the theoretical work of Jesus the Christ, we see Him shifting the medium of the gospel, and in so doing changing its nature, power, and applicability. His use of the narrative is palatably powerful. Compare the lecture-given principle "You must respect God" to the story telling about the landowner's tenants.

In our study of Jesus' last days as Jesus of Nazareth, He encountered a variety of challenges to His authority and His message. His message—coming to serve—did not go over well. Over and over He had to teach, teach again, and re-teach this principle. Much of what we call chapters 20 & 21 in Matthew's witness notes His continuing efforts. We just didn't get it.

How so? We accompanied our mother to see if we could get the best seats, when the kingdom came. We equated blessing with riches. We had difficulty understanding why the Christ would stop and heal blind folk when we should be heading to Jerusalem. And, when He told us that Father God's blessing would no longer be just ours, but would be given to the heathen to bear fruit in His vineyard—we went ballistic.

If we pay attention to Matthew, we see an interesting shift. Many have argued that his account of the Christ was written to Jewish believers. The gentle language (e.g., "kingdom of heaven" rather than "Kingdom of God") and the emphasis on Jesus' interpretational power with the Law are just two reasons to support this premise. On the other hand, Matthew includes at least three people in the genealogy of Jesus who were not descendants of Abraham, and in the midst of all the strife, after Jesus enters Jerusalem—the kingdom of heaven is no more. It is now the Kingdom of God, and believers who fail to accept the Son are called whores, called to be crushed. It was not a good time for those then, and now, who kill the Landowner's Son.

TEXTUAL ISSUES MATTHEW 20

Matthew 20:1-16. *Watch your kvetching—it's His kingdom*. To further illustrate His principal principle: humility wins, Jesus the Christ shared another illustration:

The Kingdom is like a landowner who needs workers for his vineyard. Early in the morning he goes to Nebraska street near Fowler and hires some day-laborers for \$56 a day. He sends them to the vineyard.

Later, about 9am, he saw some others gathered there doing nothing. Hey, you go work for me and I'll pay you whatever is right. They went. Then at noon and at 3pm, he did the same thing. About 5pm, an hour before quitting time, he found some others there standing around...

"Why have you been hanging around all day?," he asked. "No one will hire us," they said. "You too go and work in my vineyard."

When quitting time came, the owner told his foreman—call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with those who were last hired and going on to the first hired. So, the folks hired at 5pm were given \$56, as were the ones hired at 9am. Of course, they expected to receive more than \$56, but all they got was \$56. Kvetching, they grumbled against the landowner: "These last men only worked one hour, and their pay was equal to we who worked all day, during the heat of the day."

The landowner was not impressed. "Friend, I am not doing anything wrong, or wicked. Didn't you agree to work for \$56? Take your money and go. I choose to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have a right to do what I want with my own money? Or, are you irritated & envious because I'm generous?"

MATTHEW 20:1-16

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

³"About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' ⁵So they went.

"He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. ⁶About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

⁷" 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

⁸"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

⁹"The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.

¹²'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

¹³"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?'

¹⁴Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

¹⁶"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Jesus concluded: "So? The last will be first, and the first will be last."

Q What principal principle is Jesus the Christ trying to teach here? Why was it so important then? Now? [Success stinks as an index of blessing; please note His previous comments about why we are to give it all up—Matthew 19:29-30]

Q What common fallacy of economics is He attempting to explain? [The owner sets the rules, not the δούλοι; see also Luke 17:7-10¹]

Q How fair would characterize the landowner? The Lord God Almighty? When have you been unfair? To what extent was it justified?

Matthew 20:17-28. *The Zebedees still don't get it*. Trying to get the twelve to understand, He told them: We're going to Jerusalem, and I will be betrayed to the priests and professors. I will be condemned, to death; they will turn me over to the Roman pagans to be mocked, flogged, and crucified. On the third day, however, the Son of Man will be raised to live again!

In the midst of this horrific declaration, the Zebedee boys and Mrs. Zebedee knelt in front of Jesus asking a favor. "What do you want?" He asked.

Mrs. Zebedee answered—declare one of my boys to sit on your left, and one on your right in your kingdom.

Jesus warned—You don't know what you're asking. Can you in fact drink the cup, and be immersed in the way I am going to be immersed and drink the cup? Like the three little maids from the Mikado,² they chimed "We can."

MATTHEW 20:17-28

Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, ¹⁸"We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹and will turn him over to the pagans to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

²⁰Then the mother of Zebedee's sons [James & John] came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

²¹"What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

²²"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.

²³Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

²⁴When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the pagans lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

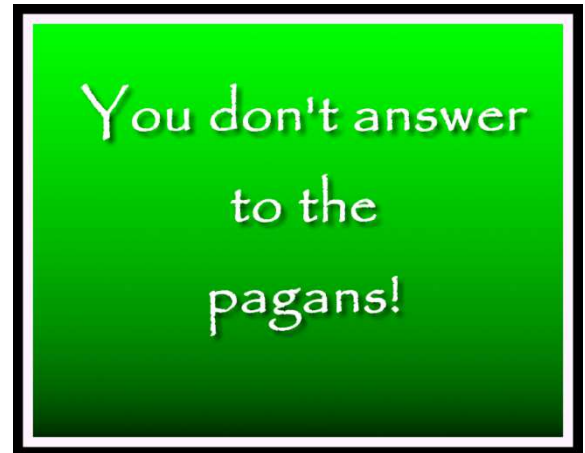
¹Luke 17:7-10 reads, "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

²See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJwesNwIUeU>

Jesus was not impressed. Okay, you three will indeed drink from My cup, but to sit at My right or left? That is not for Me to grant. These positions of honor belong to those who have been designated by Father God.

Naturally (they still didn't get it), the other ten were indignantly incensed. Jesus brought them together, and re-iterated: You know that the rulers of the pagans lord it over them, and their higher officials do the same. **THAT DOES NOT APPLY TO YOU.** Who wants to become great among you? You be the servant. Whoever wants to be first must become a slave (δουλος). After all, even "the Son of Man came not to be served, but to give His life as a ransom for many."

- Q Who asked Jesus to be on His "left and right" when the Kingdom came to power?
- Q What question did Jesus ask Mrs. Zebedee and the boys? Who had seen Jesus with Elijah and Moses? Who interrupted a plan to build three temples? What does it take to learn there is only one Anointed One?
- Q What is the solution given by the Christ for our natural, but pagan, desire to be first, to "get ahead," to sit on a throne next to the Lord Jesus?



Matthew 20:29-34. *The blind guys get it.* As they were leaving for Jerusalem, a crowd followed. Along the road, two blind guys sat and when they heard Jesus was going to come by, they shouted: "Sir, son of David, have mercy on us!" The crowd was irritated, telling them to be quiet. Even louder they shouted, "Sir, son of David, have mercy on us!"

Jesus stopped His journey and served. Calling them, He asked: "What do you want Me to do for you?" "Sir, we want our sight," they answered. Jesus felt gut sick (σπλαγχνίζομαι, splanchnizomai, to be moved in the inward parts; i.e., viscerally, 4697) and touched their eyes. Immediately they saw, and followed Him.

MATTHEW 20:29-34

As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" ³¹The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" ³²Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. ³³"Lord," they answered, "we want our sight." ³⁴Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

- Q What did the Christ teach when dealing with the irritatingly loud blind men? Where was He going? Was it not more important than a couple of blind dudes, loud obnoxious blind dudes?
- Q Why did Jesus ask them the question, "What do you want me to do for you?" Why did He grant their desire? Guts, glory, servanthood.

Matthew 21:1-11. *Jesus comes to Zion as a prophet.* As they approached Jerusalem, they stopped at the area called “house of figs” on the Mount of Olives. He sent two disciples on to the village near them, and once there, you’ll find a donkey with its colt. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone asks, simply tell them, “The Lord needs them; he will send them right away.”

This all took place to fulfill what Zechariah prophesied: “Rejoice Jerusalem and your inhabitants! Your King comes to you, gentle, riding on a donkey’s colt.”

So the two went and did as instructed, bringing the donkey and her colt, placing their cloaks on them, Jesus sat on the cloaks. To show fealty, the large crowd spread their outer coats on the ground; others cut branches from trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of Him, and the ones who followed, shouted:

Saving is the Son of David. Quoting Psalm 118, they shouted, “Blest is he who comes by the authority of the Lord God Yahweh.” Saving by the Highest!

When Jesus finally entered Jerusalem, the whole city was shook up and freaked out, asked, “Just who is this?!”

The crowds provided a partially correct answer—“This is Yeshua (“Yahweh Saves”), the prophet from Nazareth, Galilee.”

- Q Why did Jesus the Christ ride a foal into Jerusalem? What message was He communicating by using the foal, instead of the mother donkey? A donkey instead of a horse?
- Q What message were the crowds communicating by spreading their coats on the road? Branches from the trees on the road? [Note: contrary to Cecil DeMille, this did not happen in Jerusalem proper.]
- Q What did the crowds shout before and after Him on the road in the procession toward Jerusalem? What does it mean to be “blessed” when coming by the authority of the Lord God Yahweh?
- Q When the city was stirred up into chaos, what was the processional crowd’s answer? Was not His name sufficient? Why did they need to attribute “prophet” to His resume?

MATTHEW 21:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵Say to the Daughter of Zion,
"See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey." [Zechariah 9:9]

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"Hosanna [Hebrew for “save!”] to the Son of David!"
"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

[Psalm 118:26]

"Hosanna in the highest!"

¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

¹¹The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Matthew 21:12-27. *Jesus enters Zion as a janitor and re-enters as professor.*

When Jesus entered the temple, He drove out all those who were interfering with the Gentiles and women who wanted to worship. He reminded them of Isaiah's proclamation that His house would be a "house of prayer," not as Jeremiah proclamation, a "den of robbers."

While there, blind and lame people were healed, but the chief pastors and theology professors were indignant—the people were shouting: "Saving is the Son of David." Confronting Yeshua, they asked, "Don't you know what these children are actually saying?"

Jesus simply reminded them of Psalm 8:2—the lips of children and infants God has ordained praise.

Leaving there for Bethany, He spent the night. Early the next morning, He was hungry. Seeing a fig tree, He found it had nothing but leaves. "May you never bear fruit again." At once the tree withered. The disciples were freaked and amazed. How did the tree wither so quickly?

Amen, Jesus said, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you make a fig tree wither, you can move a mountain, right into the sea. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask in prayer.

Later, again, Jesus entered the temple and while teaching there, the senior pastors and old dudes questioned by what authority He was doing these things? Who gave you this authority?

MATTHEW 21:12-27

Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³"It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' [Isaiah 56:7] but you are making it a 'den of robbers.' " [Jeremiah 7:11]

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

¹⁶"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.

"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read,

"From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?" [Psalm 8:2]

¹⁷And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

¹⁸Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.

²⁰When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.

²¹Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. ²²If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

²³Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"

²⁴Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁵John's baptism--where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'" ²⁶But if we say, 'From men'—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

Okay, just one question, for you, He proposed. If you answer, I'll tell you by what authority I am doing these things. Here it is: "Where did John's baptism come? From heaven, or from men?"

Yikes. Discussing it among themselves they realized if we answer "from heaven," He will ask, "Then, why didn't you believe John the Baptizer?" But, if we answer "from men," we will incur the wrath of the people for they all assert John was a prophet. So they lied—"We don't know." "You don't know?," He chuckled. Okey, dokey: Neither will I tell you by what, or whose, authority I am doing these things.

- Q Why did Jesus take on the role of a janitor in the temple? What did He do while there in the temple? Why were the senior pastors and other staff of the temple troubled?
- Q Why was Jesus hungry after spending the night in Bethany? Why did He cause the fig tree to wither? Why were the disciples amazed?
- Q What bothered the big wheels when Jesus returned to the temple to teach? Did they question His teaching or what He was doing? Why that?
- Q How did Jesus respond? What was the key issue regarding John the Baptizer? Theologically? Pragmatically? Politically?

Matthew 21:28-45. *Jesus clarifies what happens to those who ignore the landowner.* Allow me to illustrate:

Once there was a man with two sons. Going to the first, he said, "Go work in the vineyard today." The son was rather recalcitrant—I won't he declared, but later did as was requested. Going to the other son, he said the same thing; the second son said he would go, but as it turned out, did not go to the vineyard to work.

I ask you, which of the two did what the father wanted? The first son, of course, they answered. Jesus said, Amen, the tax collectors and the whores are entering the Kingdom of God [note the absence of "heaven"] ahead of you. John came to show you the way of righteousness; the tax collectors and whores believed—you did not. And even after you saw all this, you did not turn around and believe John.

Here's another illustration, He said...

There once was a landowner who planted a vineyard. Putting a wall around it, he dug a winepress and built a watchtower. After renting the vineyard to some farmers, he went away on a journey. When harvest time approached, he sent his servants to collect the rent; i.e., his fruit. Well, the tenants grabbed his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. When he sent additional servants, the tenants treated them just as badly. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking they will at least respect my son. When the tenant farmers saw the son, they realized this is the heir—let's kill him and take his inheritance. No more rent for us.

And that's just what they did; they grabbed the son, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

MATTHEW 21:28-45

Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. ³⁴When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

²⁹" 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

³¹"Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

³²For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

³³"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. ³⁴When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

³⁵"The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.

³⁷Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

³⁸"But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' ³⁹So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

⁴⁰"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

⁴¹"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

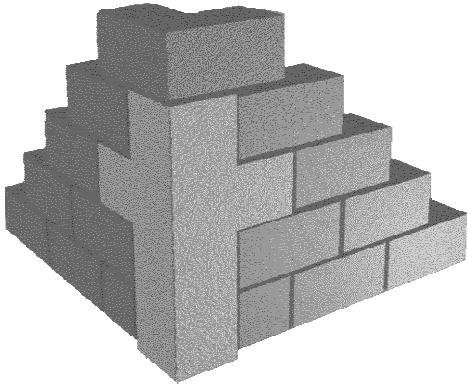
⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

" 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

⁴³"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." [vs. 44 is not found in some manuscripts.]

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. ⁴⁶They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

So Jesus asked, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what do you suppose he will do to those tenant farmers? They realized Jesus' wisdom; they responded, "He'll destroy the evil tenants. And, he'll rent the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."



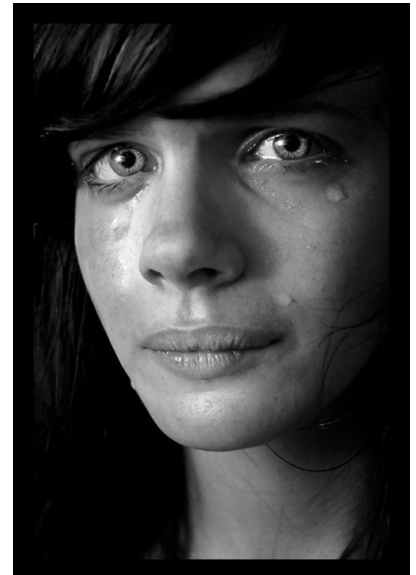
Then, He really laid it on thick. Jesus continued, don't you remember the Scriptures [Psalm 8:2; 118; 22,23] which say,

*The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
the Lord God Yahweh has done this right in front of our eyes!*

So what? The Kingdom of God [note the absence of "heaven"] will be taken away from you, and given to a people ["heathens, non-Jews"] who will produce its fruit.

This was it, too much! When they heard these parables, they knew He was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest Him, but the context called for them to be afraid of the crowd—the people held that He was indeed a prophet.

- Q How would you characterize, compare and contrast the two illustrations Jesus used to describe and support His doings/teachings in the temple?
- Q How would you like to be compared to whores (note Matthew 1:3 & 1:5)? What was it that the chief priests and elders feared so much about these two illustrations which Jesus used to teach? Which do you suppose affected them the most?
- Q Is it right for the Lord God to avenge those who kill His son? How about those whose hearts and behavior required that His son be killed?
- Q How would you communicate the message of the landowner's action regarding recalcitrant tenants to the one you love the most who is not a believer in the Christ?



20:1-16 This parable occurs only in Matthew's Gospel. In its original setting, its main point seems to be the sovereign graciousness and generosity of God extended to "latecomers" (the poor and the outcasts of society) into God's kingdom. It is addressed to the grumblers (v. 11) who just cannot handle this amazing expression of God's grace. They probably represent the religious leaders then who opposed Jesus and religious leaders today who just want the control associated with "do a lot" for the Lord God.

20:2 *a denarius*. The usual daily wage; at the current minimal wage, that would be about \$56. A Roman soldier also received one denarius a day.

20:8 *when evening came*. Because farm workers were poor, the Law required they be paid at the end of each day (cf. Lev 19:13; Dt 24:14-15).

20:15 *are you envious . . . ?* Literally, Jesus asked. "Is your eye evil ... ?"

20:17-19 See Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-33.

20:19 *and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified*. All three predictions include his resurrection on the third day (16:21; 17:23).

20:22 *drink the cup*. A figure of speech meaning to "undergo" or "experience." Here the reference is to suffering (cf. 26:39). The same figure of speech is used in Jer 25:15; Eze 23:32; Hab 2:16; Rev 14:10; 16:19; 18:6 for divine wrath or judgment. See note on Mk 10:38.

20:28 *ransom*. The Greek word was used most commonly for the price paid to redeem a slave. Similarly, Christ paid the ransom price of his own life to free us from the slavery of sin. *for*. Here the Greek for this preposition emphasizes the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. *many*. Christ "gave himself as a ransom for all men" (1Ti 2:6). Salvation is offered to "all," but only the "many" (i.e., the elect) receive it. One in contrast for many saved; see Mark 10:45.

20:29 *Jericho*. A very ancient city located five miles west of the Jordan and about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem. In Jesus' time the old Jericho was largely abandoned, but a new city, south of the old one, had been built by Herod the Great.

20:30 *Two blind men*. The other Synoptics mention only one. *Son of David*. A Messianic title (see 9:27).

21:1 *Bethphage*. The name means "house of figs." It is not mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in the NT only in connection with the Triumphal Entry. In the Talmud it is spoken of as being near Jerusalem.

21:2 *donkey*. An animal symbolic of humility, peace and Davidic royalty (see Zec 9:9; Lk 19:30). See also Mk 11:2.

21:7 *Jesus sat on them*. He sat on the cloaks. We know from Mark (11:2) and Luke (19:30) that he rode the colt. Typically, a mother donkey stayed with her offspring closely. Matthew mentions two animals, while the other Gospels note only one.

³Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

21:8 *spread their cloaks on the road.* An act of royal homage (see 2Ki 9:13). *branches.* The word means "leaves" or "leafy branches," which were readily available in nearby fields. Only John mentions palm branches (Jn 12:13), which apparently came from Jericho, since they are not native to Jerusalem.

21:9 These are three separate quotations, not necessarily spoken at the same time. *Son of David.* See 9:27. *in the highest.* That is, may those in heaven sing "Hosanna" (see Ps 148:1-2; Lk 2:14).

21:12-17 In the Synoptics the cleansing of the temple occurs during the last week of Jesus' ministry; in John it takes place during the first few months (Jn 2:12-16). Two explanations are possible:

1. There were two cleansings, one at the beginning and the other at the end of Jesus' public ministry.
2. There was only one cleansing, which took place during Passion Week but which John placed at the beginning of his account for theological reasons—to show that God's judgment was operative through the Messiah from the outset of his ministry.

Different details, however, are present in the two accounts (the selling of cattle and sheep in Jn 2:14, the whip in Jn 2:15, and the statements of Jesus in Mt 21:13; Jn 2:16). From Matthew's and Luke's accounts we might assume that the cleansing of the temple took place on Sunday, following the so-called Triumphant Entry (21:1-11). But Mark (11:15-19) clearly indicates that it was on Monday. Matthew often "compressed" narratives.

21:12 *temple area.* The "buying and selling" took place in the large outer court of the Gentiles & Women, which covered several acres (see Mk 11:15 and Luke 19:45).

21:17 *Bethany.* A village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem and the final station on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem.

21:18-22 Mark (11:12-14,20-25) places the cursing of the fig tree on Monday morning and the disciples' finding it withered on Tuesday morning. In Matthew's account the tree withered as soon as Jesus cursed it, emphasizing the immediacy of judgment. For the theological meaning of this event see note on Mk 11:14.

21:25 *from heaven, or from men?* See Mk 11:30; Lk 20:4.

21:33 *watchtower.* For guarding the vineyard, especially when the grapes ripened, and for shelter. The rabbis specified that it was to be a raised wooden platform, 15 feet high and 6 feet square.

21:41 *other tenants.* Gentiles, to whom Paul turned when Jewish believers, for the most part, rejected the gospel (Ac 13:46; 18:6). By the second century the church was composed almost entirely of Gentiles.