

## Handout: Matthew Lesson 21

The visit by a ruler was a *parousia*, meaning “coming,” “arrival,” or “being present among the people.” In the New Testament, the word gives expression to the Christian belief and expectation that Jesus will return to His people in the future (Second Advent of Christ). It is the same term Christians use for the “presence” of Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic Banquet.

Notice the repetition of threes connected to Jesus’ ministry; for example:

- Jesus’ three year ministry (year one dated from before the Passover in Jn 2:13; year two the second Passover 6:4; year three the last Passover 11:55 and 12:1)
- Jesus’ prediction that the sign of His authority is connected to three days (Mt 12:39-40)
- Three Apostles accompany Jesus to the Mt. of Transfiguration (Mt 17:1-2)
- Three different anointings by women (first on His feet during year one of His ministry = Lk 7:37-38; second on His feet in the third year on Saturday of His last week = Jn 12:3; third on His head in His third year on Wednesday of His last week = Mt 26:6-7 and Mk 14:3)
- Three predictions of His Passion and Resurrection on the third day (Mt 16:21-21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19—repeated in Mk and Lk)
- Three Temple cleansings (Jn 2:13-25; Mt 21:12 and Mk 11:11-12,15-17)
- Three different times Caiaphas declared Jesus must die (before Jesus’ last journey to Jerusalem in Jn 11:49-50; during His last week in Jn 18:14; and at Jesus’ trial in Mt 26:65-66)
- Three times Pilate declared Jesus’ innocence (Jn 18:38; 19:4 & 6)

Jesus tells three parables directed at the religious authorities who stand in opposition to Him in Mt 21:28-22:14

Parable #1: The Two Sons in Mt 21:28-32

1. The vineyard is Israel/Judea, the Old Covenant Church
2. God is the father
3. The first son who at first refused and then later served the father in the vineyard represents the tax collectors and sinners, the religious outcasts who at first refused to serve God but then answered St. John’s call to repentance
4. The second son who said “yes” but then did not serve represents the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees who are the failed shepherds of Israel who serve themselves and not God.

Parable #2: The Vineyard in Mt 21:22-41

1. God is the Master of the house (the Church)
  2. The vineyard is the Promised Land of Israel
  3. The protective hedge and the watchtower represent God’s hand of protection over His faithful covenant people
  4. The winepress was intended to produce the fruit of the harvest—the wine of the covenant, a symbol of covenant union but which in rebellion only yields the “wine of God’s wrath” in judgment
  5. The tenants in charge of the harvest are the religious authorities
- (continued)

6. The Master's servants are the Old Testament prophets (first set) and Jesus disciples (second set)
7. Jesus is the Master's Son who they will kill

Jesus is *the stone which the builders rejected*: see Mt 21:42; Ps 118: 22; Is 28:16; Acts 4:11; Rom 9:33 and 1 Pt 2:7

Parable #3: The Wedding Feast in Mt 22:1-14

1. The King is God the Father.
2. The Son/Bridegroom is Jesus, God the Son.
3. Servants sent out in three groups are the prophets of God sent out over the course of salvation history and finally the servants (Apostles and disciples) of Jesus Christ.
4. Invited guests in three groups are mankind throughout the course of salvation history.
5. The wedding feast is covenant union and fellowship with God.
6. Last invited guests are those called from all nations of the earth to enter the Kingdom and come to the feast through Jesus' Gospel of salvation.
7. The rejected wedding guest represents those who accepted the invitation to salvation but come without a "wedding garment." They answer the call but refuse to serve—will not wear the garment of grace/faith and works.
8. Implied in the parable but not mentioned is the Bride who is the Church, dressed in the wedding garment of good deeds.

In the Book of Revelation, St. John witnessed the wedding feast in Jesus' parable: *Then I heard something like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder, as they said: "Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, our God, the almighty. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready. She was allowed to wear a bright, clean linen garment." The linen represents the righteous deeds of the holy ones. Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These words are true; they come from God"* (Rev 19:6-10).

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