

JESUS TELLS THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Matthew 21:33-46

Don't you just LOVE Christmas?

In spite of fact that for many the holidays are a difficult time,
it's still the happiest season of the year for most of us!

I love Christmas!

I love the sights and sounds, *the smells* of Christmas!

I love a WHITE Christmas.

I love the STORIES of Christmas--don't you?

Usually the stories of Christmas are told by someone else, about the Christ child.

There's one UNUSUAL Christmas story

It's an unusual story because **Christ told it about Himself--It gives us HIS perspective.**

JESUS' VERSION OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY

It's found in Matt. 21.--Not where you'd expect to find the Christmas story!

Matthew is explaining **what happened to God's plan for Israel**

Israel expected Messiah to come, establish His kingdom on earth and pour
out God's blessing on His people. *What happened?*

Christ came as promised--demonstrated Who He is

God's people rejected their Messiah => Cursed instead of blessed!

19-25--Messianic presentation and rejection

19-21:17 Jesus formally presents Himself to His people

21:18-22:46 His people reject Him

21:18-22 --Cursing of the fig tree => Jesus rejects the fruitless nation

21:23-22:46 Fruitless nation rejects Messiah

Confrontation with religious leaders

They set traps for Him, hoping He'd hang himself.

He invaded their territory and threatened their authority.

They question his authority 21:23-27 **21:23** *Who gave YOU this authority?*

3 parables demonstrate implications of rejection 21:28-22:14

1. Parable of 2 sons 21:28-32

2 alternatives God gives: to obey or disobey

Those who claim to serve God, don't!

It's *sinners* who ultimately submit to God!

People who ultimately please God receive the blessings of the
kingdom--not those who put on a religious show!

2. Parable of the Evil Farmhands 21:33-46 =>

JESUS' VERSION OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY 33-46

Let's see what happens in Jesus' version of the story. => **21:33-46**

PARABLE OF THE EVIL FARMHANDS 33-40

As the story begins,...

Owner fixes up his vineyard and rents it out to other farmers 33

He owns the land. He plants the vineyard.

He fixes it up. He rents it out in exchange for part of the fruit harvest.
 He gave everything they needed, asking only that they produce fruit for his benefit.
 They were to care for his vineyard, and give him the profits.
 He goes on a trip, trusting the farmers to produce a profit for him.
"While the cat's away, the mice will play!" --but a day of reckoning is coming!

So, what do they do with his vineyard and his resources? 34-36

Farmers keep fruit for themselves and attack his servants

They're using it to enrich and empower themselves.
 They're not tending the vineyard for the benefit of the owner.
 They keep its fruit for themselves

When harvest arrives, he sends messengers to claim his produce

Unfaithful farmers attack messengers--killing some

37 Owner sends son, expecting them to respect him

Landowner tries to reach out to them, in hopes of restoring appropriate relationship

How DO they treat His son? 38-39

They know he's the son They plot against him
 They plan to seize what's his and keep it for themselves
 They throw him out of his father's vineyard ***They kill him!***

Farmers kill son, hoping to keep inheritance for themselves

What will the landowner do to the unfaithful farmers? 40-41

PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO THE PARABLE 40-41

People are caught up in the story, they blurt out logical response: "Those creeps must die!"

They don't realize they're condemning themselves.

The finger points to Israel--*that's what they're about to do to Him!*

Evil tenant farmers, no match for owner's power, were fools to believe they'd defeat the master.

He'll deal with them as they have dealt with his son 41a

"He'll bring the wretches to a wretched end!" *They've got it right!*

Owner will judge wicked farmers and rent vineyard to faithful farmers

WHAT'S THE MORAL OF THE STORY? 42-46

Jesus points out what Scripture says about future of His people.

He's been talking about THEM!

[God will take His kingdom away from evil people and give it to faithful people]

42 God makes rejected stone into cornerstone. => the head of the corner

It comes from Him! It's marvelous to behold! It's hard to believe!

Even God's patience eventually comes to an end!

43 God will take His kingdom away from the unfaithful people

God will give Kingdom to faithful people

44 Cornerstone will destroy unfaithful people

Those who trip on the stone will break

Those stone falls on will be smashed—*It's futile to fight GOD!*

Religious leaders can't stop Jesus 45-46

Leaders recognize Jesus' attack on them and want to silence Him.

They look for a chance to arrest Him.

The people won't allow that to happen.

There's much more to story than some interesting things Jesus told religious leaders of Israel 2000 years ago!

Just as the owner fixed up his vineyard, . . . expecting fruit,

Just as God prepared Israel as His vineyard, . . . expecting fruit,

God made the world and fixed it up, . . . expecting fruit!

God entrusted world to people, to care for and use it for HIS benefit!

People to whom God gave it used it for their own benefit.

When God asks people to give Him what HE deserves, they rebel and fight back.

We don't want to give Him what He deserves.

WE want to be in charge.

We want to keep the profits for ourselves!

We want to have it OUR way!

God sends messengers to represent Him; they KILL them.

So HE SENT HIS SON . . .

Surely they'll respect God' Son, won't they?

No, they nailed Him to a cross. *They killed the SON!*

SO WHAT WILL GOD DO ABOUT MAN'S REBELLION?

"He brings the wretches to a wretched end!"

Though He loves us, and doesn't want to punish us, He is just; He must punish sin.

That very death of His Son on the cross, has been accepted as payment for penalty WE deserved to pay for our sin. **[God's record book]**

God offers US a gift: eternal life. That gift is received by faith.

[Chair illustration]

God sent His Son into the world/ so that whoever trusts Him/ might not perish,/ but might receive His gift of eternal life!

He wants to give YOU that gift this morning.

Won't you receive God's gift of eternal life?