

Session 9: Identifying the Builders and the Nation

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 9)

Matthew 21:42 *Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, **The stone which the builders rejected**, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? ⁴³Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

Identify the “stone” of Matthew 21.

The “stone” which Israel rejected was Jesus.

The stone, upon which the house of Israel is to be built, they rejected. That took place at the cross. Instead of saying like Psalm 118 said, “this is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes,” the religious leaders, who are also the leaders of the nation, rejected him as the chief corner stone.

(Those who do not reject the stone become the “other husbandmen” (the members of the believing remnant of Israel – the little flock) and they will become the leaders of the nation out there in the kingdom.)

But talking to those wicked husbandmen, Jesus says:

Matthew 21:43 *Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

Anytime you see this in the commentaries they almost always want to say it is being taken away from Israel and given to the Gentiles. That does not work because who is the nation the kingdom is going to be given: the true nation Israel – the little flock – the believing remnant of Israel.

Isaiah 65:1 *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. ²I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; ³A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; ⁴Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; ⁵Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.*

There is a lot of background here, and to fully understand what is taking place we really need to go back to Isaiah and study that in depth, but I will wait and perhaps do a Bare Bones study.

(Note: Mike discusses the millennium, scriptural phrases, and reference verses are not covered in these notes for the remainder of the recording.)

That is really all we can do for now, but that should be some help.

The following were in the original notes.

Matthew 21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. ⁴⁵ And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

As we will see in verse 44, following their rejection of it (him), Israel will be given the opportunity to change their mind about that stone. That is the purpose of that one-year extension of mercy recorded in the opening chapters of Acts. If they spurn that opportunity to change their mind, then from that point on, they put themselves in the position of being “those wicked men” who are going to be ‘miserably destroyed.’

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 10: Summation of Matthew 21

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 10)

In our previous session, we were looking at the parable of Matthew 21. The reason we were looking at it is because the issue of ‘the stone’ comes up in something Jesus says. The ‘stone’ issue is at the heart of what we are introduced to in Romans 9:30-33. Let us read both of these references to refresh our memory.

Romans 9:30 *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. ³¹But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. ³²Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. **For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;** ³³As it is written, **Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.***

Before we read the Matthew 21 parable, let me remind you of two things:

1. The reason why we are going over this here in the first place.
2. The context.

Why are we going over this here? The issue of the stumblingstone is brought up by Paul beginning in Romans 9 and continuing into the next chapter where Paul will answer some more objections. But this time, the objectors would be the apostate nation. Since Paul takes us back to answer some things that are particular to Israel, we will go right along with him.

As for the context, Matthew 21 is located in the third section of Matthew’s gospel. The main focus of the third section (Matthew 16:21-23:39) has to do with: the Lord Jesus’ final denouncement of Israel’s vain religious leaders (VRL) which is focused on in chapters 22-23.

Among other things:

- The Lord prepares the little flock for the persecutions, tribulations, and afflictions the ‘rulers of Israel’ will bring against them.
- The remnant will benefit from these things in the extension of mercy (EoM) and especially once their program resumes after the dispensation of Gentile grace has ended.

Actually, when I gave you this breakdown, I sort of got the cart before the horse. The truth is, there is a more general breakdown in the book of Matthew that would be beneficial for you to know.

Before I give you the breakdown, let me put it in a context that will give meaning to the breakdown of the book of Matthew.

Just as there is an adoption ministry for us as members of the body of Christ, there is also an adoption ministry for Israel. Need I remind you of Romans 9:4-5?

***Romans 9:4** Who are **Israelites**; to whom pertaineth **the adoption**, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;*

Think about what does that means. Ask yourself, ‘What is adoption about; what is its purpose?’

Generally, biblical adoption is any father’s response to his son’s expressed desire to participate in his father’s business. Therefore, at the heart of adoption is an education in the father’s wisdom and instruction in the father’s ways.

Adoption is about a father installing his knowledge and wisdom in his son.

When it comes to our heavenly Father’s adoption, it is about the issue of godliness: the installation of godly wisdom. The process of adoption first teaches a son to see things from the Father’s point of view (the way he sees them, to think about them the way he does) – ‘godly thinking.’

It then teaches a son to take that godly thinking and have it impact his everyday conduct and behavior. This is the ‘godly living’ aspect.

Lastly, as a son begins to implement this godly thinking and godly living into the details of his life, the son is shown a particular operation that the Father is engaged. The son is then given the opportunity to engage in that operation with the Father using the sonship skills he has learned and been putting into practice. This is the ‘godly labor’ aspect.

All three aspects of godliness which are engaged in by the son while he is still here on this earth are accomplishing something:

1. They are providing for the son to labor with his Father right now.
2. They are equipping the son for his future vocation as they provide practice and the honing of sonship skills.
3. They are transforming the son into what the Father means for him to become (For Israel: kings and priests on the earth; For the body of Christ: the rulership and discharge of God’s government in the heavenly places.)

If adoption is about an educational and edificational process that transforms a son into what God means him to be, then Israel must also have an educational program whereby they are edified.

The earthly ministry of Jesus was doing just that.

That being said, we now realize that we are not the only ones who will be adopted. There are many parallels between the process for instructing the little flock and the process that instructs us. Just as there is initial instruction for us in wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity, there is also initial instruction for Israel in those same decision-making skills.

Just as Paul will build upon that initial instruction (found in Romans), their initial instruction will also be built upon. Paul is our instructor but he is not Israel's adoption educator. That task fell to Jesus Christ. Therefore, when Jesus came and began his public ministry, he was giving the members of the little flock their initial adoptive instruction and education.

With that background, we can now come to the two-fold general division in the book of Matthew.

As it turns out, Christ's adoption ministry for Israel is divided into two major parts. In accordance with that fact, the book of Matthew is divided into two major parts or phases:

- Part One: Matthew 1-12
- Part Two: Matthew 13-28

In Phase One, Jesus is preaching "the acceptable year of the Lord" which was referenced back in Isaiah 61:1-2. This is where Israel gets introduced to issues pertaining to the *new covenant* and its sonship ministry 'spirit.' (See also Ezek. 36:25-26)

*Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;² **To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;***

The semicolon sets off the 'times' from the purpose (to comfort...).

Notice there are two 'times' that are to be proclaimed:

1. The acceptable year of the LORD
2. The day of vengeance of our God

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 11: Israel's Adoption Curriculum

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 11)

The acceptable year of the Lord is being proclaimed in the first half of the book of Matthew and in connection with that, the Lord reaches out to forgive, cleanse, comfort, and deal with his people in grace and truth.

It was at the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry that he was 'tempted of the Devil' in the wilderness. What we are about to read immediately follows His temptation.

Luke 4:14 *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. ¹⁵ And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. ¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. ¹⁷ And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, ¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. ²⁰ And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ And he began to say unto them, **This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*****

You see how his ministry begins, by telling Israel that what Isaiah wrote about "the acceptable year of the Lord" was then being fulfilled!

However, 'the builders' (the religious leaders) will reject him and his ministry. In response to that, the Lord makes a shift in his ministry after Matthew 12.

Beginning in Matthew 13, the emphasis will be on "the day of vengeance of our God." This is Phase Two of Christ's ministry.

Isaiah 63:1 *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. ² Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? ³ I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be*

*sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. ⁴For **the day of vengeance** is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*

From Matthew 13 onward, the Lord will begin to hide himself from the nation. He will also begin to prepare his disciples for his departure and the “wrath to come” which John the Baptist spoke of in Matthew 3.

Matthew 3:7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from **the wrath to come?

As the nation-at-large rejects the adoption, they are left to experience the remaining curses of the law whereby the terms of the contract will be fulfilled.

For the believing remnant, the foundational instruction will be the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, & 7). Everything else that the Lord teaches them will be based on that foundation, just as our initial instruction comes from Romans 12:3-15:7 and everything else we are taught will build upon that foundation.

While a solid foundation is necessary and great, you do not want to live on a bare foundation which has no superstructure attached to it. You need walls and a roof, which is to say that we cannot stop with the initial instruction; we need all of it.

By the end of Matthew 12, Christ recognizes that the builders have rejected him and he will accordingly change his style of teaching. In chapter 13, we have the Lord presenting prophetic parables and the “dark sayings” of Proverbs 1:6.

In Phase One, the little flock was being educated in how to be “wise as serpents” and “harmless as doves.”

Matthew 10:16** Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: **be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

In Phase Two, the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom represent the little flock’s next stage in their educational curriculum. It is here they will receive the dark knowledge which produces a “young man.”

***Proverbs 1:3** To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; ⁴ To give subtilty to the simple, **to the young man knowledge and discretion.** ... ⁶ To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.*

The little flock will need to become skilled in “discretion.” That is to say, they should be developing the ability of how to respond to those they interact, developing the ability to foresee

and conduct themselves with a view toward the future. In order to teach them to do this, Christ instructs them in some details of their vocation and rewards which he only slightly alluded to earlier in their education.

The same is true for us. We initially were taught about the creature and our place and position in the heavenly places back in Romans 8. We were only slightly introduced to our eternal ‘godly labor.’ Later, our apostle will fill and expand upon that basic knowledge. In the meantime, we are supposed to be living with our eyes fixed on what we do know about our future vocation and “the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Our conduct ought to be impacted by:

- The knowledge of who we have been made to be in Christ.
- Why we were given that new identity.
- A view toward our own future vocation in the heavenly places.

Well, that is enough of the context for now. The point here is that when we read in Matthew 21, we now can know some things:

1. We are in phase two of Christ’s adoptive teaching ministry which is no longer emphasizing the “the acceptable year of the Lord,” but has now switched to the issue of “the day of vengeance of our God.”
2. We anticipate the “dark sayings” of the parables of the kingdom which are not for everyone, but only for the little flock.
3. These parables constitute the next phase of the little flock’s education, moving them from “simple sons” to being a “young man.”
4. The Lord is going to make his pronouncements against Israel’s vain religious system and instruct his disciples concerning upcoming events and their actions in accordance with those events.

Space for personal reflection and notes