

Date: 10.22.2004

Passage: Matthew 21:33-44 (Parable of the Tenants)

Who was the parable directed towards?

The parable was directed towards the crowd, also the Pharisees and priests.

According to the parable, what does the following symbolize/signifies?

Landowner:	God
Vineyard:	Jerusalem – the land that God gave the nation of Israel
Hedge:	God's protection of Jerusalem and Israel being set apart from the rest of the world
Winepress/watchtower:	Temple and also the advantages that God gave
Tenants:	The Jews, including the Pharisees and priests
Servants:	God's prophets
Fruit:	Bringing people to God; fruits of the spirit (Gal 5:23 - 24)
Son:	Jesus
They:	The crowd, the Pharisees, the priests
Other tenants:	The Gentiles
Stone/capstone:	Jesus
Builders:	The Jews

Who replied to Jesus when He posed the question about how should the owner deal with the tenants at the end of the parable? Why did Jesus ask them the question?

The crowd, probably the Pharisees and the priests gave the answer to the question. The Pharisees and priests had been very judgmental. Jesus used the same method as Nathan did with David, to show him the error of his ways. (2 Samuel 12)

What is the function of the capstone? Why is Jesus described as the capstone?

It is the stone that holds the two ends of the meeting arch together, providing it structural integrity. When it is removed, the arch would collapse. Jesus is the one who holds all things together.

Who are the ones who will be broken into pieces when they fall on the stone?

The Christians who come to believe in Jesus will need to break themselves so that God as the potter will mold them to become useful vessels in His ministry. They could also be the Jews or others who reject God.

Who are the ones who will be crushed by the stone?

The Jews, and the others who reject God. (1 Peter 2:6-8)

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Other points:

- Jesus gave this parable and the ending before the ending happened, i.e. before he was crucified. From those who were listening to Him at that point in time, this was a prophecy. They probably were unable to comprehend it fully.
- The gospel was preached to the Gentiles after the resurrection of Christ.
- The religious leaders (the Pharisees and priests) were supposed to recognize Him as the Son of God. They were worried that He would sway the people away from them, thus removing their influence among the people. Application: When people see the truth, they may be stopped from recognizing it because of their pride, ego etc.
- The parable shows us that when we have a chance to do something (spread the gospel), we should do so; else the chance may be taken from us.
- Don't judge so harshly and be so unbending like the Pharisees. Remember the Lord is of grace and mercy. Before pointing our fingers at others, we should examine ourselves.