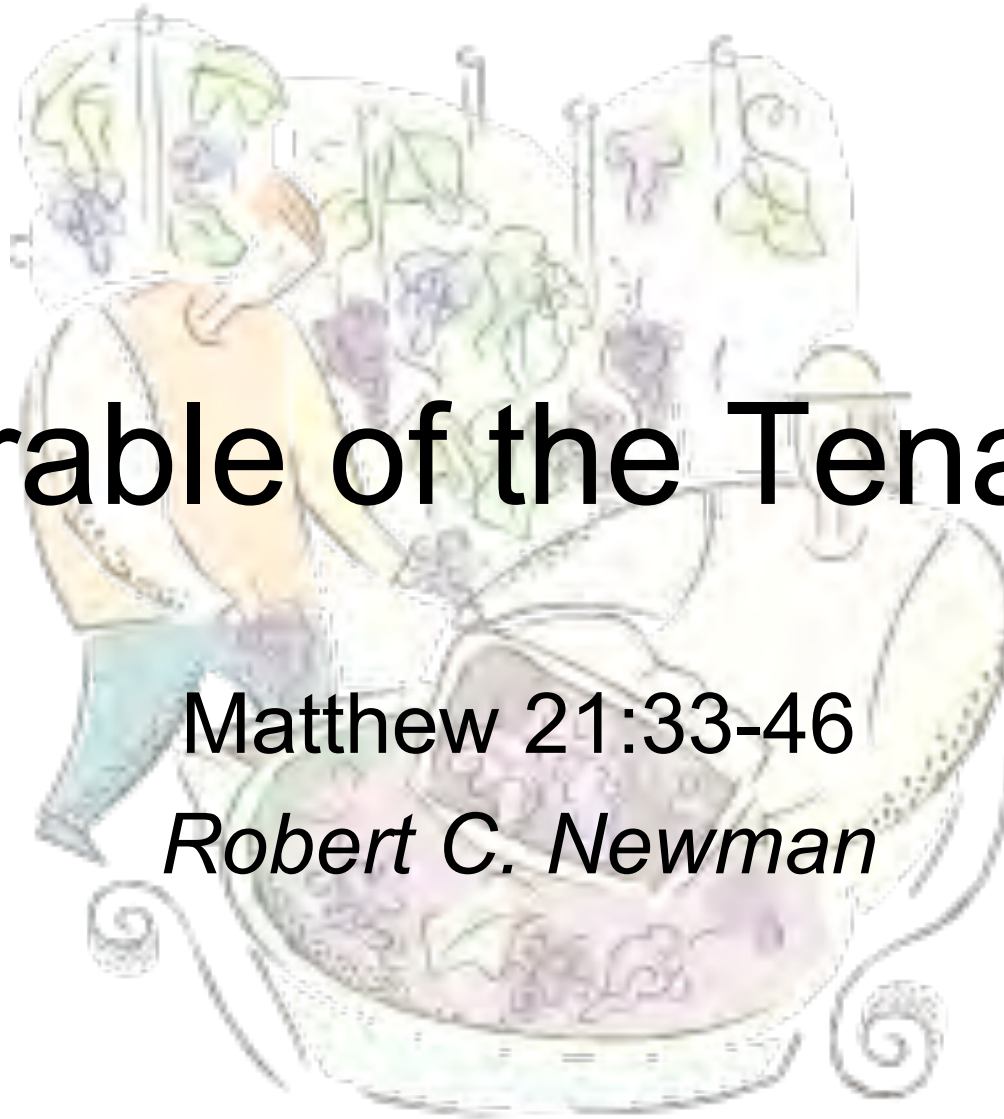


Parable of the Tenants

Matthew 21:33-46
Robert C. Newman



Matthew 21:33-46 (1)

Matt 21:33 (NIV) "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. 34 When 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. 36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. 37 Last 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.' 39 So 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?"

Matthew 21:33-46 (2)

Matt 21:41 (NIV) "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." 42 Jesus 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. 44 He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. 46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

The Story

- A landowner develops some of his land to be a vineyard:
 - Planting vines
 - Building wall, winepress, watchtower
- He rents vineyard to tenants, goes away on a journey.
- At harvest time, he sends his servants to collect the rent.

The Story

- Instead of paying the rent, the tenants mistreat, even kill, some of the servants.
- The owner finally sends his son (perhaps the tenants claim the servants are bogus?)
- The tenants plot together & kill the son (to take the property).
- Perhaps they assume the owner has died.

Jesus' Question

- What will the owner do when he shows up? (note that the narration stops before the owner comes).
- The audience replies:
 - He will kill the tenants...
 - ... and rent the vineyard to others.

Its Significance

- Immediate context:
 - A picture of God (owner)
 - And Jewish leaders (tenants)
 - God will bring disaster for rejecting his Son.
- Broader significance:
 - God pictured as landlord (cp CS Lewis, *Pilgrim's Regress*)
 - And humans as tenants

Its Significance

- The landlord makes good provision for the vineyard.
 - God makes good provision for us.
- Landlord rents out the vineyard.
 - God entrusts us with life, abilities, etc.
- Landlord goes away.
 - God is silent, invisible, etc. (cp Psalm 50)

Its Significance

- Landlord sends servants.
 - God sends OT prophets, apostles, Bible, preachers, etc.
- Landlord is very patient, but doesn't cancel rent.
 - God's mercy and justice displayed.
- Landlord sends his son.
 - God sends his Son

Its Significance

- Landlord sends son.
 - Emphasis here is not on Jesus' atonement, but on the aggravated rebellion in the face of God's mercy.
- The landlord comes.
 - God will finally come in judgment.

Humans as Tenants

- Ungrateful:
 - Romans 1:21: (NIV) For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
- Misread God's patience as softness:
 - Psalm 50:21: (NIV) These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you.

Humans as Tenants

- Misread God's absence as death:
 - 2 Peter 3:4: (NIV) They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."
- Think to take property for selves:
 - Genesis 3:5: (NIV) "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Humans as Tenants

- But disaster lies ahead:
 - Deuteronomy 32:35: (NIV) It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them.



The End

... is not yet.
There is still time to repent.